

JANUARY 1911

# THE DARK LADY

by George Bernard Shaw

PRICE 15 CENTS

## THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE



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ATTA  
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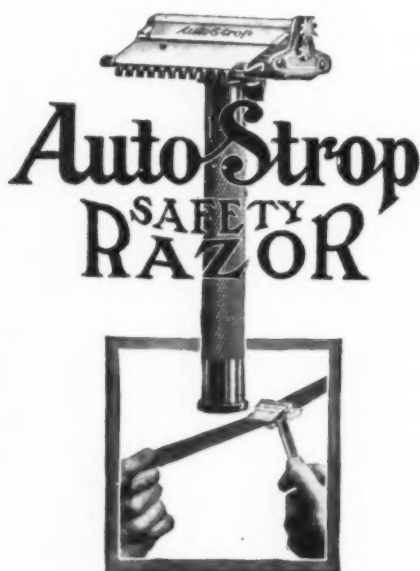
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# THE RED BOOK

## MAGAZINE

EDITED BY KARL EDWIN HARRIMAN

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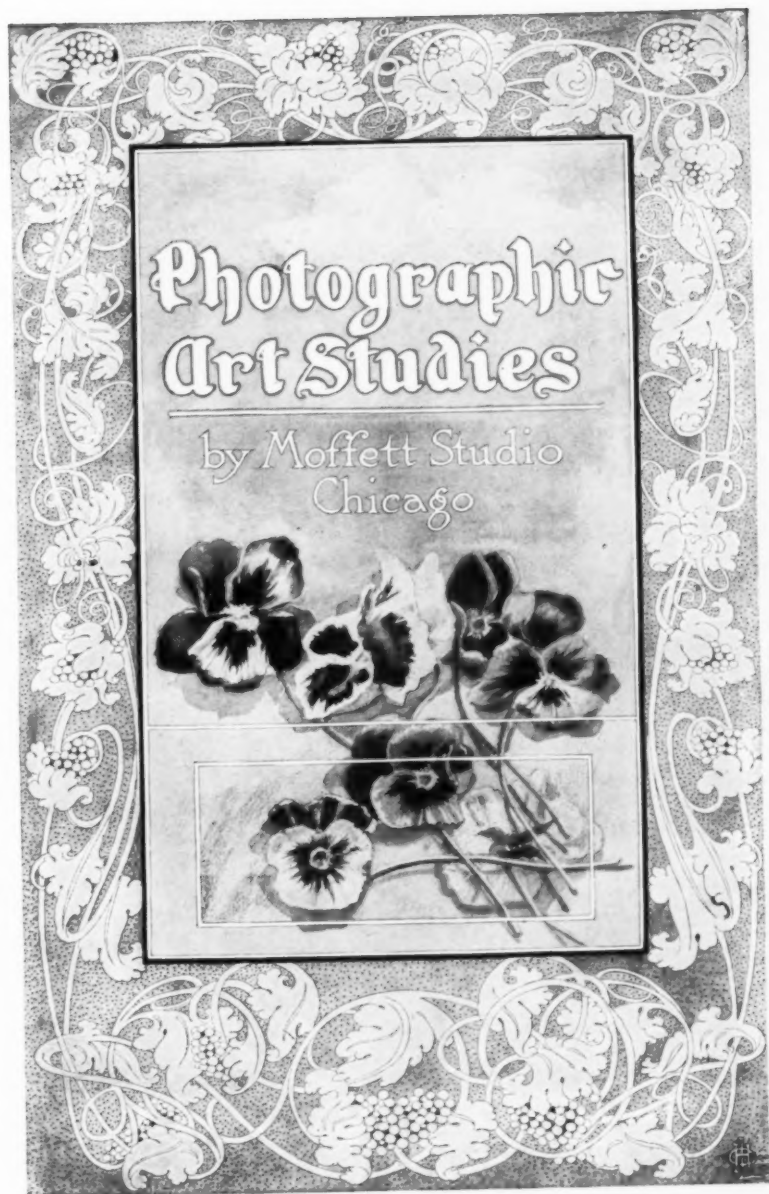
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MISS CATHERINE CALVERT  
in "The Deep Purple"







MISS JANE COWL  
in "The Gamblers"





MISS EDNA WALLACE HOPPER  
in "Jumping Jupiter"





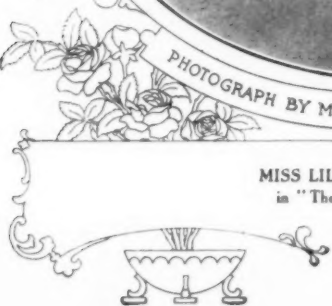
MISS ELSIE JANIS  
starring in "The Slim Princess"





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MISS LILLIAN LORRAINE  
in "The Follies of 1910"





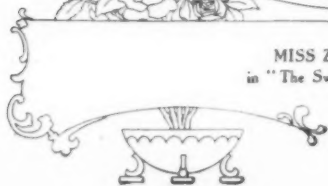


MISS BESSIE WYNNE  
in Vaudeville



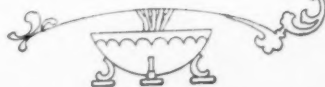


MISS ZOE BARNETTE  
in "The Sweetest Girl in Paris"





MISS SALLIE FISHER  
in Vaudeville





MISS CHARLOTTE JOHNSON  
in "The Midnight Sons"







MISS EILEEN KEARNEY  
in "The Girl in the Taxi"





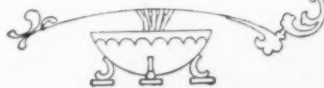
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MISS DOROTHY MAYNARD  
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MISS ELSA RYAN  
in "The Girl and the Drummer"





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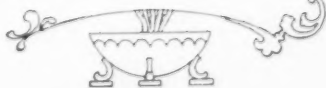
MISS CARROLL McCOMAS  
in "The Dollar Princess"







MISS GRACE KING  
in "The Slim Princess"





MISS RUBY FITZHUGH  
in "Lower Berth 13"





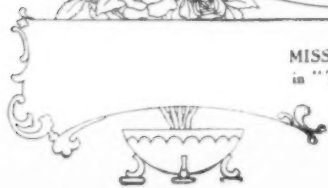
MISS ANNA FITZHUGH  
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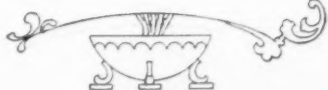
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MISS ELOISE REED  
in "The Old Town"





MISS MARGARET REED  
in "The Old Town"







MISS LYDIA SCOTT  
in "The Follies of 1910"





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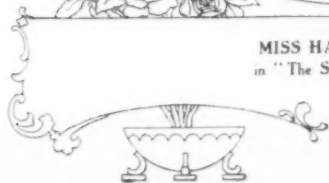
MISS ESTHER LEE  
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MISS HARRIET NOTTER  
in "The Stubborn Cinderella"





MISS GERTRUDE MILLINGTON  
in "The Girl in the Taxi"

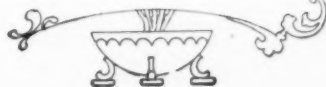


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MISS GLADYS BRESTON  
in "The Midnight Sons"



MISS IRMA PRICHARD  
in Vaudeville





This portrait of me was taken by Dr. Craig Juman on the 28th October 1910  
The picture, which is quite as interesting pictorially as the man looking at it, is by Minchard Bone.  
Dr. Conrad Shaw.



# THE RED BOOK

January 1911

MAGAZINE

Vol. XVI. No. 3

## THE DARK LADY OF THE SONNETS★ BY GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

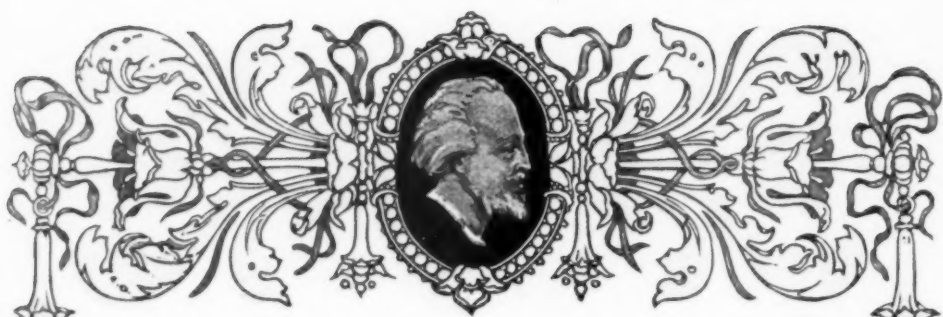
**EDITORIAL FOREWORD**—It is one of the charming little ironies of history Victor Hugo so loved, that Mary Fitton, dead these three hundred years and in life the woman who distracted, betrayed and inspired Shakespeare, should be earning the first money for the fund which is to give England the long-awaited Shakespeare National Memorial Theatre.

Considerable gifts the fund already has received but the first step in the campaign to earn money for it was taken on the afternoon of November 24th when "The Dark Lady of the Sonnets," a little play by George Bernard Shaw, was enacted "for the benefit of the National Memorial Theatre."

"An interlude," Mr. Shaw calls it. The word will serve, though skit would be as exact for this fantastic, cheeky, now poetic and now ribald little fabrication which presents the poet as the brazen flatterer of his Queen, the ready "snapper-up of unconsidered trifles," the despair of his innamorata, whom he uses spitefully, and last of all, as the shrewd, energetic, eloquent advocate of a national theatre project.

Was Mary Fitton "the dark lady of the sonnets?" The scholarly and ingenious Thomas Tyler said so, and took a whole book to say it. Frank Harris, in the wild and whirling, yet amazingly explicit pages of that volume which made some stir in





the autumn of 1909, "*The Man Shakespeare and His Tragic Life-Story*," went even further than Mr. Tyler. He not only read Mary Fitton, maid of honor to Queen Elizabeth, into all the sonnets of Shakespeare from CXXVIII to CLII—which relate to the poet's love for a certain "dark lady"—but also identified her with the Rosaline of both "*Love's Labor Lost*" and "*Romeo and Juliet*," the Cressida of "*Troilus and Cressida*" and the Cleopatra of "*Antony and Cleopatra*."

When, if we accept Mr. Harris' views, Shakespeare poured out his love for Mary Fitton in the Sonnets, he was thirty-four and she nineteen. For two years she had been a maid of honor to the Virgin Queen. She was the younger daughter of Sir Edward Fitton (the name is also spelled Fytton) of Garsworth in Cheshire and a sister of Lady Anne Newdigate of Arbury.

When we strike the name Newdigate we are brought face to face with the fact that the Lady Newdigate of our time confronts the theory of Thomas Tyler relative to the Dark Lady with the statement that there are four portraits still at Arbury which prove that Mary Fitton was fair, brown-haired and gray-eyed.

This statement has not, however, exploded the fascinating Tyler theory, nor does Mr. Harris make any mention of it.

Mary Fitton loved the stage and had a talent for acting. She assumed leading parts in numerous court pageants and masques. She was First Dancer at a wedding in Black Friars in 1600 where that William Herbert (afterwards Earl of Pembroke), whom Tyler, Harris and many others believe to have been the hero of the Sonnets, was best man.

Though warmly received at court as the nephew of the gallant and splendid Sir Philip Sydney, he was suddenly dismissed for an intrigue with one of the maids of honor and sent to Fleet Prison. That maid of honor Mr. Tyler again identified as





Mary Fitton. She, too, it is known, was dismissed from court and sent into retirement at Arbury.

She was twice married, her first husband being William Polewele, her second, Captain Lougher. She died in 1647 and was buried at Gawsforth, where there is a monument to Sir Edward Fitton, his wife and four children.

Of the love of William Shakespeare for the maid of honor, Mr. Harris makes this bold record:

"His passion for Mary Fitton lasted some twelve years. Again and again he lived golden hours with her like those Cleopatra boasted of and regretted. Life is wasted quickly in such passions; whipped to madness by jealousy, Mary Fitton was the only woman Shakespeare ever loved, or at least, the only woman he loved with such intensity as to influence his art. She was Rosaline, Cressida, Cleopatra, and the 'dark lady' of the Sonnets. All his other women are parts of her or reflections of her, as all his heroes are sides of Hamlet."

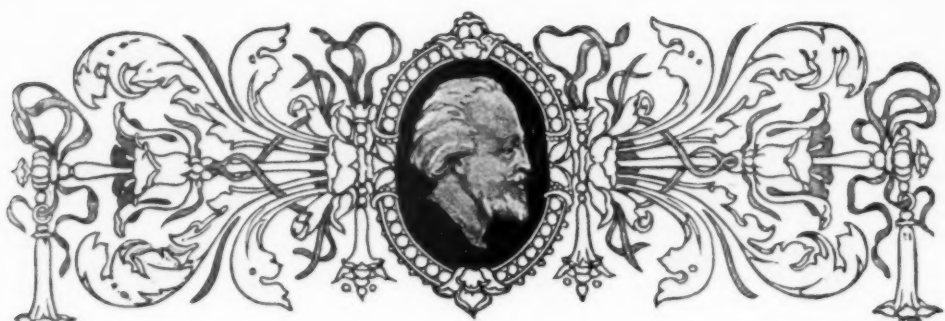
Mistress Mary's career was turbulent and romantic. There are documents in existence which indicate that she contracted an invalid marriage at the age of sixteen. There is also warrant for the statement that she, wrapped in a horseman's cloak, used to leave the palace at night to meet her lovers.

In the twenty-six sonnets devoted to her, Shakespeare imbued rhapsody with accusation, pronouncing her "tyrannous," "faithless," "false," "coquettish," "proud," "black as hell," "dark as night," "full of foul faults," "cruel," "unworthy," "unkind," "inconstant," "forsworn."

A few words about the cause that the master-stirrer of modern English drama now makes the long-dead beauty serve.

The ter-centenary of Shakespeare's death is six years distant. It is proposed to commemorate that anniversary by the foundation of the Shakespeare National Memorial Theatre in London.





Six years ago the first suggestion of this project was made by Richard Badger, a wealthy brewer, who, after unsuccessful efforts to obtain permission to erect some kind of memorial at Stratford-on-Avon, offered to place the sum of \$12,500 in the hands of the London County Council as the basis of a fund to be used for the erection of a memorial in London. The County Council declined to accept any financial responsibility in the matter but did agree to provide a site if the fund reached proportions that warranted such a gift. Since then Mr. Badger has died and his will increased his contribution to \$17,500.

At first the committee which grew out of the agitation for a memorial that should possess a national significance issued a call for \$500,000 for a statue of Shakespeare to be erected on the site now occupied by the statue of the Duke of Kent in London, and also for \$500,000 to be devoted to some international purpose in furtherance of Shakespearean aims.

The statue project was abandoned and effort finally was concentrated on the founding of a national theatre as the proper Shakespeare memorial—a theatre, in young Lord Lytton's phrase, which would be a permanent home for British dramas, in which the supremacy of Shakespeare in literature should receive the fullest possible recognition.

A princely gift, from an anonymous source, of \$350,000 has given the cause an enormous impetus. English actors of the standing of Forbes-Robertson and Martin Harvey have spoken in dozens of English cities in behalf of the project, subscriptions are coming in steadily from every part of the United Kingdom and the colonies, and plans are now forming by which the propaganda shall be extended to this country, for it is the purpose of the founders that the Shakespeare National Memorial Theatre shall become a shrine for the whole English speaking world.—JAMES O'DONNELL BENNETT.





## THE DARK LADY OF THE SONNETS\*

*Fin de siècle 15-1600. Midsummer night on the terrace of the Palace at Whitehall, overlooking the river.*

*A Beefeater on guard. A Cloaked Man approaches.*

THE BEEFEATER. Stand. Who goes there? Give the word.

THE MAN. Marry! I cannot. I have een clean forgotten it.

THE BEEFEATER. Then cannot you pass here. What is your business? Who are you? Are you a true man?

THE MAN. Far from it, Master Warder. I am not the same man two days together: now Adam, now Benvolio, and anon the Ghost.

THE BEEFEATER. A ghost! Angels and ministers of grace defend us!

THE MAN. Well said, Master Warder. With your leave I will set that down in writing; for I have a very poor and unhappy brain for remembrance. [*He takes out his tablets and writes*]. Methinks this is a good scene, with you on your lonely watch, and I approaching like a ghost in the moonlight. Stare not so amazedly at me; but mark what I say. I keep tryst here to-night with a dark lady. She promised to bribe the warder. I gave her the wherewithal: four tickets for the Globe Theatre.

THE BEEFEATER. Plague on her! She gave me two only.

THE MAN [*detaching a tablet*]. My friend: present this tablet and you will be admitted at any time when the plays of Will Shakespear are in hand. Bring your wife. Bring your friends. Bring the whole garrison. There is ever plenty of room.

THE BEEFEATER. I care not for these new-fangled plays. No man can understand a word of them. They are all talk. Will you not give me a pass for The Spanish Tragedy?

THE MAN. To see The Spanish Tragedy one pays, my friend. Here are the means. [*He gives him a piece of gold*].

THE BEEFEATER [*overwhelmed*]. Gold! Oh, sir, you are a better paymaster than your dark lady.

THE MAN. Women are thrifty, my friend.

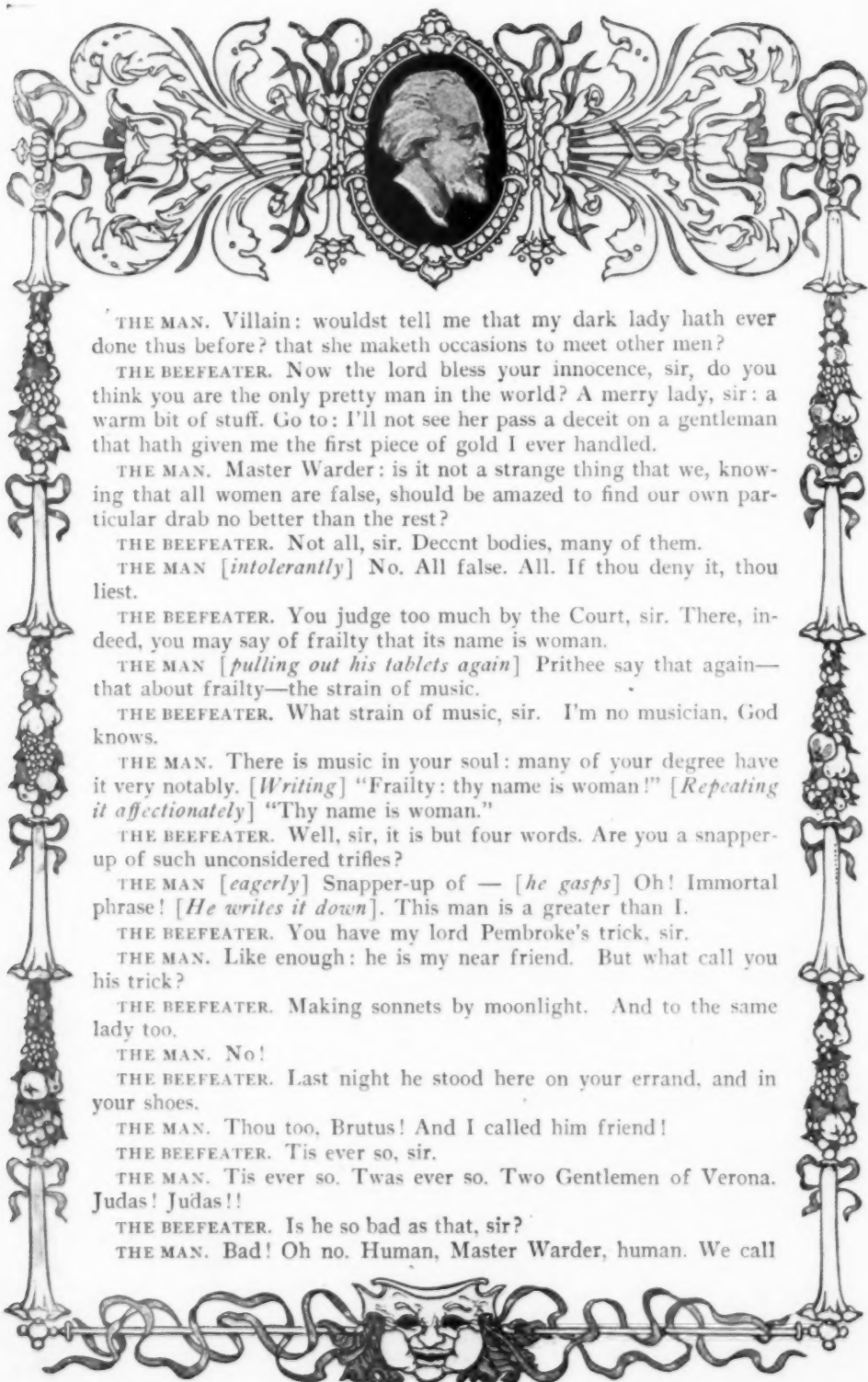
THE BEEFEATER. Tis so, sir. And you have to consider that the most open handed of us must een cheapen that which we buy every day. This lady has to make a present to a warder nigh every night.

THE MAN [*turning pale*]. I'll not believe it.

THE BEEFEATER. Now you, sir, I dare be sworn, do not have an adventure like this twice in the year.







THE MAN. Villain: wouldst tell me that my dark lady hath ever done thus before? that she maketh occasions to meet other men?

THE BEEFEATER. Now the lord bless your innocence, sir, do you think you are the only pretty man in the world? A merry lady, sir: a warm bit of stuff. Go to: I'll not see her pass a deceit on a gentleman that hath given me the first piece of gold I ever handled.

THE MAN. Master Warder: is it not a strange thing that we, knowing that all women are false, should be amazed to find our own particular drab no better than the rest?

THE BEEFEATER. Not all, sir. Decent bodies, many of them.

THE MAN [*intolerantly*]. No. All false. All. If thou deny it, thou liest.

THE BEEFEATER. You judge too much by the Court, sir. There, indeed, you may say of frailty that its name is woman.

THE MAN [*pulling out his tablets again*]. Prithce say that again—that about frailty—the strain of music.

THE BEEFEATER. What strain of music, sir. I'm no musician, God knows.

THE MAN. There is music in your soul: many of your degree have it very notably. [*Writing*] "Frailty: thy name is woman!" [*Repeating it affectionately*] "Thy name is woman."

THE BEEFEATER. Well, sir, it is but four words. Are you a snapper-up of such unconsidered trifles?

THE MAN [*eagerly*]. Snapper-up of — [*he gasps*] Oh! Immortal phrase! [*He writes it down*]. This man is a greater than I.

THE BEEFEATER. You have my lord Pembroke's trick, sir.

THE MAN. Like enough: he is my near friend. But what call you his trick?

THE BEEFEATER. Making sonnets by moonlight. And to the same lady too.

THE MAN. No!

THE BEEFEATER. Last night he stood here on your errand, and in your shoes.

THE MAN. Thou too, Brutus! And I called him friend!

THE BEEFEATER. Tis ever so, sir.

THE MAN. Tis ever so. Twas ever so. Two Gentlemen of Verona. Judas! Judas!!

THE BEEFEATER. Is he so bad as that, sir?

THE MAN. Bad! Oh no. Human, Master Warder, human. We call



one another names when we are offended, as children do. That is all.

THE BEEFEATER. Ay, sir: words, words, words. Mere wind, sir. We fill our bellies with the east wind, sir, as the Scripture hath it. You cannot feed capons so.

THE MAN. A good cadence. By your leave [*He makes a note of it*].

THE BEEFEATER. What manner of thing is a cadence, sir? I have not heard of it.

THE MAN. A thing to rule the world with, friend.

THE BEEFEATER. You speak strangely, sir—no offence. But, art't like you, you are a very civil gentleman; and a poor man feels drawn to you, you being, as twere, willing to share your thought with his.

THE MAN. 'Tis my trade. But alas! the world for the most part will none of me. [*Someone begins to open the palace door from within*].

THE BEEFEATER. Here comes your lady, sir. I'll to t'other end of my ward. You may een take your time about your business; I shall not return too suddenly unless my sergeant comes prowling round. 'Tis a fell sergeant, sir: strict in his arrest. Go'd'en sir, and good luck. [*He goes*].

THE MAN. "Strict in his arrest." "Fell sergeant." [*As if tasting a ripe plum*] O-o-o-h! [*He makes a note of them*].

*A Cloaked Lady gropes her way from the palace and wanders along the terrace, walking in her sleep.*

THE LADY [*rubbing her hands as if washing them*] Out, damned spot. You will mar all with these cosmetics. God made you one face; and you make yourself another. Think of your grave, woman, not ever of being beautified. Twill not out. All the perfumes of Arabia will not wash away these freckles.

THE MAN. "All the perfumes of Arabia!" "Beautified!" "Beautified:" a poem in a single word. Can this be my Mary? [*to the Lady*] Why do you speak in a strange voice, and utter poetry for the first time? Are you ailing? You walk like the dead. Mary. Mary.

THE LADY. Mary. Mary. Who would have thought that woman to have had so much blood in her! Is it my fault that my counsellors put deeds of blood on me? Fie! If you were woman you would have more wit than to stain the floor so foully. Hold not up her head so: the hair is false. I tell you yet again, Mary's buried: she cannot come out of her grave. I fear her not: these cats that dare jump into thrones though they be fit only for men's laps must be put away. What's done cannot be undone. Out, I say. Fie! a queen, and freckled!







THE MAN [*shaking her arm*] Mary, I say, art asleep?  
*The Lady wakes, starts, and nearly faints. He catches her on his arm.*

THE LADY. Where am I? What art thou?

THE MAN. I cry your mercy. I have mistook your person all this while. Methought you were my Mary—my mistress.

THE LADY. Profane fellow: how dare you?

THE MAN. Be not wroth with me, lady. My mistress is a marvellous proper woman. But she does not speak so well as you. "All the perfumes of Arabia." That was well said—spoken with good accent and excellent discretion.

THE LADY. Have I been in speech with you here?

THE MAN. Why, yes, fair lady. Have you forgot it?

THE LADY. I have walked in my sleep.

THE MAN. Walk ever in your sleep, fair one: for then your words drop like honey.

THE LADY [*with cold majesty*] Know you to whom you speak, sir, that you dare express yourself so saucily?

THE MAN [*unabashed*] Not I, nor care neither. You are some lady of the Court, belike. To me there are but two sorts of women: those with excellent voices, sweet and low, and cackling hens that cannot make me dream. Your voice has all manner of loveliness in it. Grudge me not a short hour of its music.

THE LADY. Sir, you are overbold. Season your admiration for a while with—

THE MAN [*holding up his hand to stop her*] "Season your admiration for a while—"

THE LADY. Fellow: do you dare to mimic me to my face?

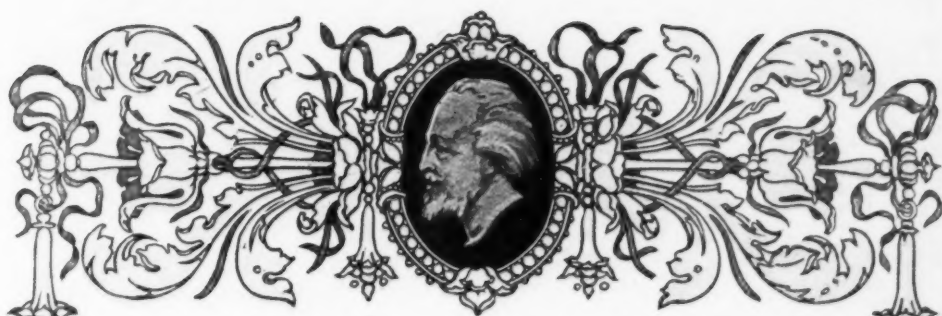
THE MAN. 'Tis music. Can you not hear? When a good musician sings a song, do you not sing it and sing it again till you have caught and fixed its perfect melody? "Season your admiration for a while"—God! the history of man's heart is in that one word admiration. Admiration! What was it? "Suspend your admiration for a space—"

THE LADY. A very vile jingle of esses. I said "Season your—"

THE MAN [*hastily picking it up*] Season, ay, season, season, season. Plague on my memory, my wretched memory! I must een write it down. [*He begins to write, but stops, his memory failing him*] Yet tell me which was the vile jingle? You said very justly: mine own ear caught it even as my false tongue said it.

THE LADY. You said, "for a space." I said, "for a while."





THE MAN. "For a space" [*He writes it*]: Good! And now be mine neither for a space nor a while, but for ever.

THE LADY. Odds my life! Are you by chance making love to me, knave?

THE MAN. Nay: tis you who have made the love: I but pour it out at your feet. I cannot but love a lass that sets such store by an apt word. Therefore vouchsafe, divine perfection of a woman—no: I have said that before somewhere; and the wordy garment of my love for you must be fire-new—

THE LADY. You talk too much, sir. Let me warn you: I am more accustomed to be listened to than preached at.

THE MAN. The most are like that that do talk well. But though you spake with the tongues of angels, as indeed you do, yet know that I am the king of words—

THE LADY. A king, ha!

THE MAN. No less. We are poor things, we men and women—

THE LADY. Dare you call me woman?

THE MAN. What nobler name can I tender you? How else can I love you? Yet you may well shrink from the name: have I not said that we are but poor things? Yet there is a power that can redeem us.

THE LADY. Gramercy for your sermon, sir. I hope I know my duty.

THE MAN. This is no sermon, but the living truth. The power I speak of is the power of immortal poesy. For know that vile as this world is, and worms as we are, you have but to invest all this vileness with a magical garment of words to transfigure us and uplift our souls till earth flowers into a million heavens.

THE LADY. You spoil your heaven with your million. You are extravagant. Observe some measure in your speech.

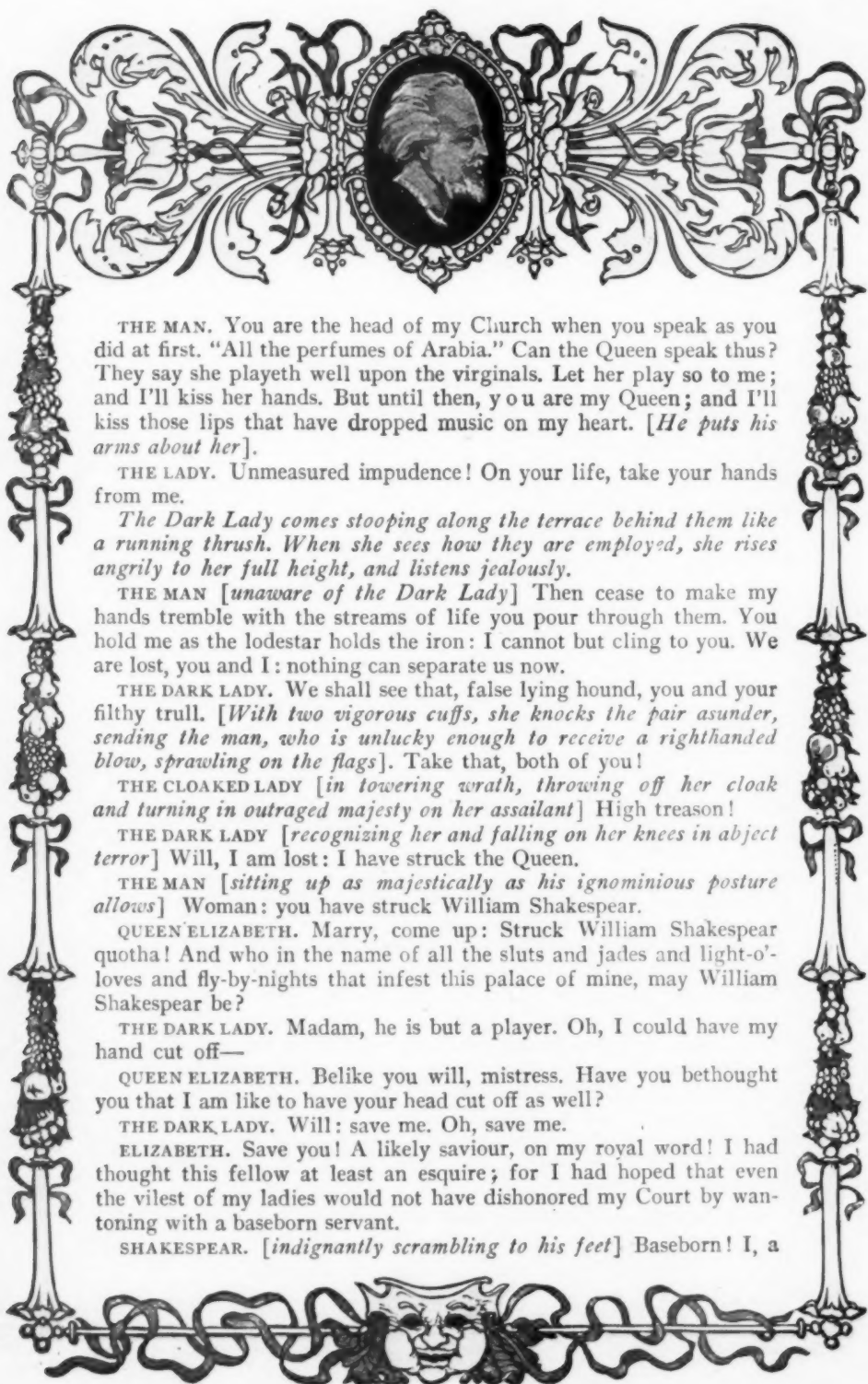
THE MAN. You speak now as Ben does.

THE LADY. And who, pray, is Ben?

THE MAN. A learned bricklayer who thinks that the sky is at the top of his ladder, and so takes it on him to rebuke me for flying. I tell you there is no word yet coined and no melody yet sung that is extravagant and majestic enough for the glory that lovely words can reveal. It is heresy to deny it: have you not been taught that in the beginning was the Word? that the Word was with God? nay, that the Word was God?

THE LADY. Beware, fellow, how you presume to speak of holy things. The Queen is the head of the Church.





THE MAN. You are the head of my Church when you speak as you did at first. "All the perfumes of Arabia." Can the Queen speak thus? They say she playeth well upon the virginals. Let her play so to me; and I'll kiss her hands. But until then, you are my Queen; and I'll kiss those lips that have dropped music on my heart. [*He puts his arms about her*].

THE LADY. Unmeasured impudence! On your life, take your hands from me.

*The Dark Lady comes stooping along the terrace behind them like a running thrush. When she sees how they are employed, she rises angrily to her full height, and listens jealously.*

THE MAN [*unaware of the Dark Lady*] Then cease to make my hands tremble with the streams of life you pour through them. You hold me as the lodestar holds the iron: I cannot but cling to you. We are lost, you and I: nothing can separate us now.

THE DARK LADY. We shall see that, false lying hound, you and your filthy trull. [*With two vigorous cuffs, she knocks the pair asunder, sending the man, who is unlucky enough to receive a righthanded blow, sprawling on the flags*]. Take that, both of you!

THE CLOAKED LADY [*in towering wrath, throwing off her cloak and turning in outraged majesty on her assailant*] High treason!

THE DARK LADY [*recognizing her and falling on her knees in abject terror*] Will, I am lost: I have struck the Queen.

THE MAN [*sitting up as majestically as his ignominious posture allows*] Woman: you have struck William Shakespear.

QUEEN ELIZABETH. Marry, come up: Struck William Shakespear quotha! And who in the name of all the sluts and jades and light-o'-loves and fly-by-nights that infest this palace of mine, may William Shakespear be?

THE DARK LADY. Madam, he is but a player. Oh, I could have my hand cut off—

QUEEN ELIZABETH. Belike you will, mistress. Have you bethought you that I am like to have your head cut off as well?

THE DARK LADY. Will: save me. Oh, save me.

ELIZABETH. Save you! A likely saviour, on my royal word! I had thought this fellow at least an esquire; for I had hoped that even the vilest of my ladies would not have dishonored my Court by wantonning with a baseborn servant.

SHAKESPEAR. [*indignantly scrambling to his feet*] Baseborn! I, a



Shakespear of Stratford! I, whose mother was an Arden! baseborn!  
You forget yourself, madam.

ELIZABETH [*furiously*] S'blood! do I so? I will teach you—

THE DARK LADY [*rising from her knees and throwing herself between them*] Will, in God's name anger her not further. It is death.  
Madam: do not listen to him.

SHAKESPEAR. Not were it een to save your life, Mary, not to mention mine own, will I flatter a monarch who forgets what is due to my family. I deny not that my father was brought down to be a poor bankrupt; but twas his gentle blood that rendered him unskillful in trade. Never did he disown his debts. Tis true he paid them not; but it is an attested truth that he gave bills for them; and twas those bills, in the hands of base tradesmen, that were his undoing.

ELIZABETH [*grimly*] The son of your father shall learn his place in the presence of the daughter of Harry the Eighth.

SHAKESPEAR [*swelling with intolerant importance*] Name not that inordinate man in the same breath with Stratford's worthiest alderman. John Shakespear wedded but once: Harry Tudor was married six times. You should blush to utter his name.

THE DARK LADY } crying out together { Will: for pity's sake—  
ELIZABETH } Insolent dog—

SHAKESPEAR [*cutting them short*] How know you that King Harry was indeed your father?

ELIZABETH { Zounds! Now by—[*she stops to grind her teeth with rage*].

THE DARK LADY { She will have me whipped through the streets.  
Oh God! Oh God!

SHAKESPEAR. Learn to know yourself better, madam. I am an honest gentleman of unquestioned parentage, and have already sent in my demand for the coat-of-arms that is lawfully mine. Can you say as much for yourself?

ELIZABETH [*almost beside herself*] Another word; and I begin with mine own hands the work the hangman shall finish.

SHAKESPEAR. You are no true Tudor: this baggage here has as good a right to your royal seat as you. What maintains you on the throne of England? Is it your renowned wit, your wisdom that sets at nought the craftiest statesman of the Christian world? No. Tis the mere chance that might have happened to any milkmaid, the caprice of nature that made you the most wondrous piece of beauty







the age hath seen. [*Elizabeth, on the point of striking him, lets her hands drop*]. That is what hath brought all men to your feet, and founded your throne on the impregnable rock of your proud heart, a stony island in a sea of desire. There, madam, is some wholesome blunt honest speaking for you. Now do your worst.

ELIZABETH [*with dignity*] Master Shakespear: it is well for you that I am a merciful prince. I make allowance for your rustic ignorance. But remember that there are things which be true, and are yet not seemly to be said—I will not say to a queen; for you will have it that I am none—but to a virgin.

SHAKESPEAR [*bluntly*] It is no fault of mine that you are a virgin, madam, albeit tis my misfortune.

THE DARK LADY [*terrified again*] In mercy, madam, hold no further discourse with him. He hath ever some lewd jest on his tongue. You hear how he useth me—calling me baggage and the like to your Majesty's face.

ELIZABETH. As for you, mistress, I have yet to demand what your business is at this hour in this place, and how you come to be so concerned with a player that you strike blindly at your sovereign in your jealousy of him.

THE DARK LADY. Madam, as I live and hope for salvation—

SHAKESPEAR [*sardonically*] Ha!

THE DARK LADY [*angrily*]—ay, I'm as like to be saved as thou that believest naught save some black magic of words and verses—I say, madam, as I am a living woman I came here to break with him for ever. Oh, madam, if you would know what misery is, listen to this man that is more than man and less at the same time. He will tie you down to anatomize your very soul: he will wring tears of blood from your humiliation; and then he will heal the wound with flatteries that no woman can resist.

SHAKESPEAR. Flatteries! Oh, madam, I put my case at your royal feet. I confess to much. I have a rude tongue; I am unmannerly; I blaspheme against the holiness of anointed royalty; but oh, my royal mistress, AM I a flatterer?

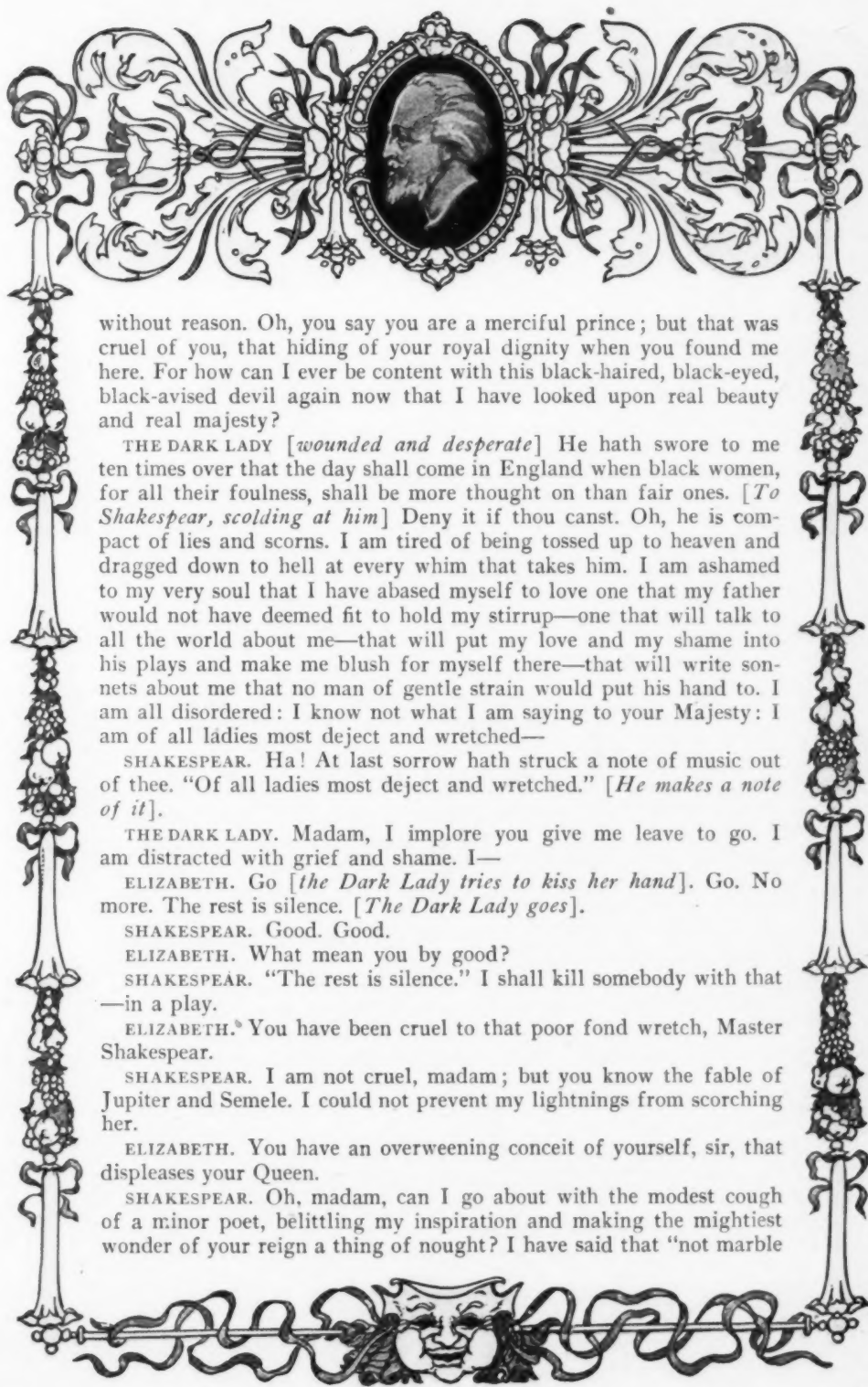
ELIZABETH. I absolve you as to that. You are far too plain a dealer to please me.

THE DARK LADY. Madam, he is flattering you even as he speaks.

ELIZABETH [*a terrible flash in her eye*] Ha! Is it so?

SHAKESPEAR. Madam, she is jealous; and, heaven help me, not





without reason. Oh, you say you are a merciful prince; but that was cruel of you, that hiding of your royal dignity when you found me here. For how can I ever be content with this black-haired, black-eyed, black-avised devil again now that I have looked upon real beauty and real majesty?

THE DARK LADY [*wounded and desperate*] He hath sworn to me ten times over that the day shall come in England when black women, for all their foulness, shall be more thought on than fair ones. [*To Shakespear, scolding at him*] Deny it if thou canst. Oh, he is compact of lies and scorns. I am tired of being tossed up to heaven and dragged down to hell at every whim that takes him. I am ashamed to my very soul that I have abased myself to love one that my father would not have deemed fit to hold my stirrup—one that will talk to all the world about me—that will put my love and my shame into his plays and make me blush for myself there—that will write sonnets about me that no man of gentle strain would put his hand to. I am all disordered: I know not what I am saying to your Majesty: I am of all ladies most deject and wretched—

SHAKESPEAR. Ha! At last sorrow hath struck a note of music out of thee. "Of all ladies most deject and wretched." [*He makes a note of it*].

THE DARK LADY. Madam, I implore you give me leave to go. I am distracted with grief and shame. I—

ELIZABETH. Go [*the Dark Lady tries to kiss her hand*]. Go. No more. The rest is silence. [*The Dark Lady goes*].

SHAKESPEAR. Good. Good.

ELIZABETH. What mean you by good?

SHAKESPEAR. "The rest is silence." I shall kill somebody with that—in a play.

ELIZABETH.<sup>b</sup> You have been cruel to that poor fond wretch, Master Shakespear.

SHAKESPEAR. I am not cruel, madam; but you know the fable of Jupiter and Semele. I could not prevent my lightnings from scorching her.

ELIZABETH. You have an overweening conceit of yourself, sir, that displeases your Queen.

SHAKESPEAR. Oh, madam, can I go about with the modest cough of a minor poet, belittling my inspiration and making the mightiest wonder of your reign a thing of nought? I have said that "not marble





nor the gilded monuments of princes shall outlive" the words with which I make the world glorious or foolish at my will. Besides, I would have you think me great enough to grant me a boon.

ELIZABETH. I hope it is a boon that may be asked of a virgin Queen without offence, sir. I mistrust your forwardness; and I bid you remember that I do not suffer persons of your degree—if I may say so without offence to your father the alderman—to presume too far.

SHAKESPEAR. Oh, madam, I shall not forget myself again; though by my life could I make you a serving wench, tis neither a queen nor a virgin would you be for as much longer as a flash of lightning might take to cross the river to the Bankside. But since you are a queen and will none of me, nor of Philip of Spain, nor of any other mortal man, I must e'en contain myself as best I may, and ask you only for a boon of State.

ELIZABETH. A boon of State already! You are becoming a courtier like the rest of them. You lack advancement.

SHAKESPEAR. "Lack advancement." By your Majesty's leave: a queenly phrase. [*He writes it down*].

ELIZABETH. Your tables begin to anger me, sir. I am not here to write your plays for you.

SHAKESPEAR. You are here to inspire them, madam. For this, among the rest, were you ordained. But the boon I crave is that you do endow a great playhouse or, if I may make bold to coin a scholarly name for it, a National Theatre, for the better instruction and gracing of your Majesty's subjects.

ELIZABETH. Why, sir, are there not theatres enow on the Bankside and in Blackfriars?

SHAKESPEAR. Madam: these are the adventures of needy and desperate men that must, to save themselves from perishing of want, give the sillier sort of people what they best like; and what they best like, God knows, is not their own betterment and instruction, as we well see by the example of the churches, which must needs compel men to frequent them, though they be open to all without charge. Only when there is a matter of a murder, or a plot, or a pretty youth in petticoats, or some naughty tale of wantonness, will your subjects pay the great cost of good players and their finery, with a little profit to boot. To prove this I will tell you that I have written two noble and excellent plays setting forth the advancement of women of high nature and fruitful industry even as your Majesty is; the one a skillful





physician, the other a sister devoted to good works. I have also writ two of the most damnable foolishnesses in the-world, in the one of which a woman goeth in man's attire and maketh impudent love to her swain, who pleaseth the groundlings by overthrowing a wrestler; whilst, in the other, one of the same kidney sheweth her wit by saying endless naughtinesses to a gentleman as lewd as herself. I have writ these to save my friends from penury, yet shewing my scorn for such follies and for them that praise them by calling the one *As You Like It*, meaning that it is not as *I* like it, and the other *Much Ado About Nothing*, as it truly is. And now these two filthy pieces drive their nobler fellows from the stage. Where indeed I cannot have my lady physician presented at all, she being too honest a woman for the taste of the town. Wherefore I humbly beg your Majesty to give order that a theatre be endowed out of the public revenue for the playing of those pieces of mine which no merchant will touch, seeing that his gain is so much greater with the worse than with the better. Thereby you shall also encourage other men to undertake the writing of plays who do now despise it and leave it wholly to those whose counsels will work little good to your realm. For this writing of plays is a great matter, forming as it does the minds and affections of men in such sort that whatsoever they see done in show on the stage, they will presently be doing in earnest in the world, which is but a larger stage. Of late, as you know, the Church taught the people by means of plays; but the people flocked only to such as were full of superstitious miracles and bloody martyrdoms; and so the Church, which also was just then brought into straits by the policy of your royal father, did abandon and discountenance the art of playing; and thus it fell into the hands of poor players and greedy merchants that had their pockets to look to and not the greatness of this your kingdom. Therefore now must your Majesty take up that good work that your Church hath abandoned, and restore the art of playing to its former use and dignity.

ELIZABETH. Master Shakespear: I will speak of this matter to the Lord Treasurer.

SHAKESPEAR. Then am I undone, madam; for there was never yet a Lord Treasurer that could find a penny for anything over and above the necessary expenses of the government, save for a war or a salary for his own nephew.

ELIZABETH. Master Shakespear: you speak sooth; yet cannot I in





any wise mend it. I dare not offend my unruly Puritans by making so lewd a place as the playhouse a public charge; and there be a thousand things to be done in this London of mine before your poetry can have its penny from the general purse. I tell thee, Master Will, it will be three hundred years and more before my subjects learn that man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that cometh from the mouth of those whom God inspires. By that time you and I will be dust beneath the feet of the horses, if indeed there be any horses then, and men be still riding instead of flying. Now it may be that by then your works will be dust also.

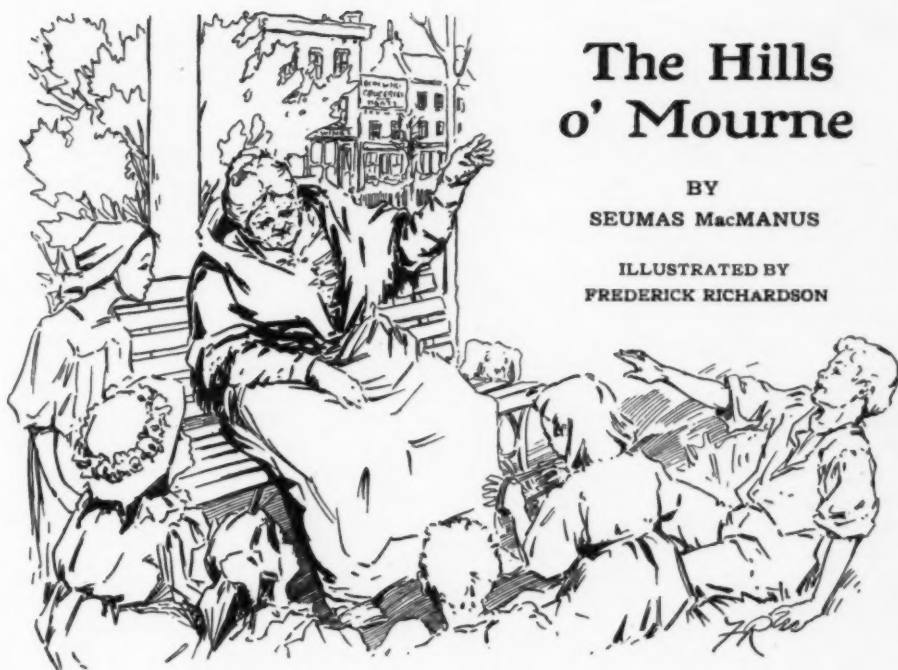
SHAKESPEAR. They will stand, madam: fear not for that.

ELIZABETH. It may prove so. But of this I am certain (for I know my countrymen) that until every other country in the Christian world, even to barbarian Muscovy and the hamlets of the boorish Germans, have its playhouse at the public charge, England will never adventure. And she will adventure then only because it is her desire to be ever in the fashion, and to do humbly and dutifully whatso she seeth everybody else doing. In the meantime you must content yourself as best you can by the playing of those two pieces which you give out as the most damnable ever writ, but which your countrymen, I warn you, will swear are the best you have ever done. But this I will say, that if I could speak across the ages to our descendants, I should heartily recommend them to fulfill your wish; for the Scotch minstrel hath well said that he who makes the songs of a nation is mightier than he who makes its laws; and the same may well be true of plays and interludes. And now, sir, I see my Court approach; and to shew them that I am no ignorant city madam that maketh her husband bedeck her with jewels instead of encouraging the arts and honoring their professors, I will dance a measure with you before them all if you have the skill to step it.

SHAKESPEAR. I am but an indifferent dancer, madam, and for that am most commonly set to play old men. The air is my element, not the earth. But with your Majesty for my partner I will think I am treading the plains of heaven; and that shall satisfy even my spirit. So vouchsafe me your royal hand; and to't.

*They lead a dance, in which the Court joins.*





## The Hills o' Mourne

BY  
SEUMAS MacMANUS

ILLUSTRATED BY  
FREDERICK RICHARDSON

Every youth in the neighborhood she surrounded with Ireland

**Y**OU cannot transplant an oak tree at sixty. And when, her husband laid under the green sod, Nancy MacIlroy through misty eyes looked her last on the hills of Tyrone, there was sad truth in her parting words, "I'm laivin' the roots o' me heart with ye."

It is a far cry from Tyrone to Bethune Street—but now that his Mother was alone in the world, her son Jimmy had, against her will, insisted that her home must henceforth be there, where he and his little family could watch after her in her declining days—and where, though his home was small, it could hold another, and though his income limited, one mouth more couldn't cause disaster—and, anyhow, his old Mother must be kept beyond worry and want.

The physical impossibility of her being beyond worry, however, was amply demonstrated when, on the first Saturday night after her landing, having gone to confession to Father Cassidy at the little Church of the Holy Angels, and

having confessed—nothing—for Nancy was sinless as the unborn babe—and Father Cassidy having informed her that as he couldn't go through the form of giving absolution where no sin was disclosed, she must recall some grave sin of her past life and confess it again, saying, "Don't ye think, my poor woman, you sometime or other were guilty of some serious offense for which you should ask God's pardon?" he got Nancy's reply, with a heart-breaking sigh, "Oh, yes, Father dear, I'm afeared God 'ill never forgive me for laivin' Ireland."

If Ireland couldn't be transported to Bethune Street—and sad it was that it could not—Bethune Street might, however, be brought to the Green Isle. And Nancy MacIlroy accomplished what petty-minded geographers and engineers alike would declare impossible. Not merely her own grandchildren, but likewise every youth in the neighborhood, she surrounded with Ireland.



From the stoop at Jimmy's, or from a Hudson Park bench, during those long summer gloamings, when Nancy's heart was always particularly lonesome, she went with it on wings of fancy, and carried her score of little companions a thousand leagues o'er ocean to the Isle of All Delights, where (these west side youths and maidens, Irish and German, quickly realized), everything was far more delectable than everything everywhere else—New York and Philadelphia, and Boston (the boys soon realized) were, after all, little hay-towns (and slow at that) compared with Ballyshanny and Donegal, and Kellybegs.

In Ireland the hills were higher, and the glens greener and the skies bluer than in any other land the world over—candies were sweeter, and American apples redder, and the sun was bigger, and whiter, and brighter, than elsewhere outside of Paradise. There, too, the birds sang more sweetly, and the brooks crooned more soothingly, and no one knew heart-ache, and no one knew care—and Life was just one interminable round of joy. There fairies skipped upon the hills and danced upon the raths to the most bewitching music ever heard, in just such gloamings as this—only lovelier—and on just such moonlight nights—only more silvery, and more beautiful.

All ships on the high seas bore upon Ireland, all princes and peoples, kingdoms and principalities turned their eyes to it, as to earth's center. Ireland lay next to Paradise; sure, the fishers in the western bays had frequently seen the green hills and the turreted castles and the shining palaces of Tir-na'n-Og, The Land of Everlasting Youth, rise above the waters on beauteous evenings, and disappear beneath again—long Dan Meechan, to her own knowledge, had seen it thrice with his own eyes.

Ireland was the land of story, too, the land of children, where one could hear stories of fairies and heroes from cockcrow to candle-light, from June to January, and from January round to June again. And the stories still to be but beginning. (Profound sensation here among the auditors.) Then, almost every evening, samples of these tales must be

presented—and who could present them more wonderfully, more entrancingly, than Nancy—the bewitching tales of the fairies, the astounding feats of the Giant Fionn, the brave fight of the dauntless Cuchullin (the man who, had he flourished to-day and rented a room in the Greenwich district, would probably be greater and more powerful and more worshiped and adored almost than "Game Pete" MacGinnis, the Father of the district), the extraordinary fascinating adventures of that most extraordinary personage, the King of Ireland's son who, through all the olden far-off years, was forever journeying that perilous journey to the Well o' The World's End to bring back the three bottles of magic water, the certain and only cure for the dying princess whom he loved to distraction—and the no less wonderful and marvelous adventures of the Widow Woman's Three Sons?

And the story-telling would probably be wound up with an entrancing Irish ballad—

I'm sittin' on the stile, Mary,  
Where we sat, side by side,  
On a bright May-morn long ago  
When first you were my bride.  
The corn was springin' fresh and green,  
The lark sang loud and high,  
And the red was on your lip, Mary,  
And the love-light in your eye.

Though, usually, Nancy's voice would tremble and break upon the last lines of this stanza, and there would be no more of the ballad that day.

Laying her hand affectionately on the little fair and black and brown heads, she would finally say,

"Now, childer, 'tis time for to go home and ate your stirabout and say your prayers—not forgettin' to ask God for to bliss poor Ireland—and go to bed."

And thus were things going when Mrs. MacIlroy discovered The Hills o' Mourne. It was only on the night before the great discovery, that her son Jimmy, after looking at her, where she sat silently on the doorstep, holding in her hand a few blades of green grass on which her eyes were riveted, had said thickly—said it indeed for the thousandth time in the past five years:



"Mother dear, I'm afeared your heart's breakin' for Ireland"

"Mother dear, I'm afeared your heart's breakin' for Ireland."

And she, suddenly starting as from a dream, had, after a moment, replied:

"For Ireland! Jimmy, *avic machree*, son o' me heart, I could never live happy in Ireland, afther findin' how delightful Amirky is."

Then her heart was momentarily held in anguished spasm for the terrible falsehood—and remembering the sermon she had heard Father Terence preach on the last Good Friday she was in Ireland, she

waited, spell-bound, to hear a cock crow. The secret of her broken heart was hidden at heavy cost.

On the before-mentioned morning of the great discovery, she was returning as usual from seven o'clock mass and had stepped into Louis Baum's antique-cum-modern store (which ever yawned to catch worms both earliest and latest) and asked for a cent's worth of chewing gum—Nancy having already succumbed to the national vice—and was waiting for Louis to discover the island of gum in



the confusing and multitudinous archipelago of supplies which his ten-foot-square store presented to the navigators of Greenwich Street, when her eye was arrested by a heavily framed picture suspended among other second-hand supplies that graced the back of the store.

Holding her breath, she went nearer, and Louis saw her perfervidly clasp hands in front of it.

"Arrah, tell me, Misther Bum," she said, with a cry that might have meant ecstasy or might have meant anguish, "surely them isn't the Hills o' Mourne?"

Louis' heart, through its thick commercial envelopment, was touched.

"Dat iss just vot it iss."



In her heart a great scheme was growing

A little cry, now undoubtedly of joy, escaped Nancy.

"And surely that isn't Mary Donnelly's wee house forninst the hill?"

"Indeed it iss."

"Ye — don't — tell me! Thanks-be-to God!"

"And that surely isn't Mary's son Johnny dhrivin' the cows down the Red Park?"

"It iss so."

"Only Mary used to have but two cows; she must o' bought that spreckly one—a fine one, too, God bless her!—after I left."

"It iss quite likely, mein goot woman."

"Well! well! well! Glory be to God!"

Nancy dropped into a dusty chair and lifted not her gaze from that "Scene in the Catskills" for an hour.

With a snowy white Irish linen handkerchief which, along with her beads, she always carried in her clasped hands going to and returning from church, she was wiping her eyes as she quitted the "Greenwich Emporium."

And thereafter, each morning, on her return from mass, she always found she had important business to transact at the emporium. A boot lace needed, a cent's worth of gum (for now she became a regular gum-topper), a penn'oth of pins or maybe she "just stepped in for to know the time on the clock."

"Well, thanks to the Lord, 'tis gettin' short o' breath I'm afear'd I am," making great efforts to pant, "I'll just take a saitt in the chair here a minute till my draught comes back to me."

So that on each morning of each day of the week, and each week of the month, the "Scene in the Catskills" had a wet-eyed admirer long seated in front of it.

"Well, glory be! I've got me breath again. 'Tis an onhandy thing, is the ould age, Mr. Bum. I must be pushin' for home—to help Jane fit the childer for school. Good-mornin' and God bless ye, Mr. Bum."

That picture was earning for him compound interest.

Having quit his Emporium for some valuable minutes to watch the progress of a dog-fight outside Mullarky's "Pleasant Hour," one day, Mr. Baum returned



"Surely them isn't th' Hills o' Mourne?"

to find Nancy crooning an old song, "The Hills o' Mourne," before the picture, swaying her body in unison. She ceased abruptly when aware of the proprietor's return.

With an apologetic laugh, she said:

"When my head does be idle in the mornin's, foolish ould songs and things comes into it. I'm wondherin' what ye'd be after wantin', Mr. Bum, for that ould picthur ye have strung on the wall there."

She jerked her thumb somewhat disparagingly toward it, and spoke in the casual manner of one who seeks knowledge out of the idlest curiosity. Mr. Baum, with one straight eye, winked at a gentleman who had come in to discuss the dog-fight, as he replied:

"I wouldn't be able to sell dat picture for less den vun tollar."

In Nancy MacIlroy's happy heart, a great scheme was growing as she went home that morning—a secret scheme, too, of which no one must learn until it was an accomplished fact. By superhuman efforts, she would scrape and save till—Oh, happy thought, she should present herself with *The Hills o' Mourne* as a Christmas present! It was already early September 'tis true, but a determined person with a sublime incentive could work miracles, even in three and a half months. And, oh, joy intoxicating! To think how, forever after, all her days, she should have *The Hills o' Mourne* in the house with her, in front of it herself,

seated in the second-hand rocking chair that Jimmy, by a great financial strain, had purchased specially for her—and feasting her eyes on the hills of her heart all the day long—except, of course, when she would be at mass or helping Jane around the house. Joy too great to dwell upon this was, for it made her feel heady.

Nancy henceforth took great interest in Mr. Baum's welfare; and if he sneezed, that was good reason for inquiring after his health every morning for a week; and, for all his ills and aches she prescribed herb cures only known to herself and to old Molly Carriban of Ballyboyle, who was now dead. Meanwhile, no miser ever set his heart on gold with such ungodly greed as did Nancy MacIlroy hers upon copper cents, which she scraped for and hoarded with a gluttony that would shame the veriest miser of them all. Such a grip did covetousness lay upon her soul, that the ragamuffins of Bethune Street now went storyless. The fairies she completely forgot. Fin McCool's deeds of prowess were slighted; and the King of Ireland's son, whom she had, a month ago, started upon a perilous quest, was, amid dangers that racked the souls of all the youths of Bethune Street, left to his fate.

When December's first day came, Nancy MacIlroy's pile had mounted to the dizzy count of eighty-seven cents. There was no mistaking the accuracy of this, for the hoard was counted several times a day, and on that morning of early December, she remarked to Mr. Baum with a casualty that was superb:

"I'm thinkin' I'll be takin' that ould picthur from ye one of these days. I've 'most a dollar saved now."

"A tollar!" exclaimed Louis. "Vy, the price of dat picture iss twenty-seven-fifty."

Louis' heart immediately smote him when he saw the spasm of pain that suddenly twitched the old woman's face. He recalled his joking remark of some months before, and was conscience-stricken.

Nancy MacIlroy, feeling with her hands along the wall, groped her way out of the Emporium.

A big policeman with rich Connaught brogue was arming and cheering her when she reached the home of her son.

"The craiture 'ill be all right in no time," he said to Mrs. Jimmy, "if ye give her a nice dhrop of warm water with a little ground ginger in it, and a lump o' sugar, and a thimble of whiskey. The waikness overtook her a block back, and she was for sittin' down on the could curbstone when God sent me along. Ye shouldn't, on no account, ma'am, let the ould craiture travel on the empty stomach in the mornin'—for the wind always gets round the heart of the ould people when there is no brakfust there for to fill the spaces."

The physiological lore of policeman Terence Kirwan might be improved upon without difficulty, but no man in New York, or out of it, had a heart nearer the human ideal of perfection.

From her little weakness Nancy had fully recovered in a few days, and despite the entreaties of her son and daughter-in-law, must begin attending early mass again.

"'Twas a good thing," she said to herself, as she sat in front of the picture once more, feasting her hungry eyes upon it, "'tis a gran' thing entirely that I can have both me eighty-seven cents and the picthur, too—comin' in and lookin' at it every day."

Moreover, if she owned it altogether, she might tire of lookin' at it always—or her house might burn down or be struck by lightning, or any one of a thousand other catastrophes might occur—yes, 'twas better far, thank God, that the picture was safe in Louis' keeping and she to have the enjoyment of it, while he took all the risks. On second thoughts it is true, she concluded that she must consult Father Cassidy, at her next confession, regarding the morality of this. But, meanwhile, she would risk her soul enjoying the sweet sin.

"What's the picture ye're lookin' at, me good woman?"

It was Game Pete himself, arrayed in his great genial smile who interrupted her subtle sophistry, and whom she now saw standing behind her when she looked up.

"Oh! Misther MacGinnis," she said, clasping her hands, "don't ye know it? 'Tis The Hills o' Mourne."

"Ha! Ha! Ha! Ye know I'm from Kerry meself."

Game Pete leaned over to decipher the title for himself, and that instant, Mr.

Baum, slipping up behind, gave his coat-tails a violent tug, and when Pete looked round, shook his head and laid a finger on his lips.

"Yes, de Hills o' Mourne," Louis said corroboratingly.

"Oh, to be sure," said Peter, "and the beautifullest hills they are in all Ireland—not even barrin' Kerry."

A magnanimous admission that did credit even to Peter's magnanimous heart.

"Thank ye, and God bless ye," Nancy said—on behalf of the Hills.

Game Pete laid an affectionate hand upon Nancy's shoulder as he questioned her.

"How long are ye away from old Ireland, ma'am?"

"Och! och!" she said, "I'm five hundred years, an' I'm not five days—'tis six years, they say, since I sailed from Derry. But sure, I've been back in Ireland every day o' me life since."

Nancy's body began to rock to and fro in front of the picture while, utterly forgetful of the presence of others, she began crooning to herself a pathetic old air.

Pete turned away, suddenly.

"God help the craiture," he said to Louis after a minute. "I had an ould mother meself—just the picture of her—the sweetest ould woman that ever walked God's earth. Who is she, Louis, anyway? Does she live hereabout?"

And Pete, as he stepped out of the Emporium, after hearing the story of Nancy and the picture, undoubtedly brushed something—whatever it was—from the corner of his eye.

"May God bliss her innocent, poor heart," he muttered.

If Mrs. MacIlroy could not treat herself to the picture as a Christmas present, she had now made up her mind to give herself the next best Christmas treat. All Christmas Day, from early mass to dinner hour, and again for a couple of golden hours in the afternoon, she should sit before, and feast her eyes upon, the Hills o' Mourne. And in honor of its being holy Christmas Day,

she must avoid even risk of sinning; so, she set aside fifteen cents, which, in its composite units, should be expended as compensation at regular intervals during the entertainment, for gum and candies, and every other rich and rare luxury with which the Emporium tempted the palates of its patrons. It was lavish expenditure, of course, but it justified itself—and it



"I'll be takin' that picthur one of these days"





Falling forward, her face between her arms

would impress Louis that he was not entertaining a mere unprofitable trespasser. On Christmas Day, moreover, extravagance was not merely permissible, but meritorious.

When, with beating heart, on this which was to be one of the great days of her life, she left home for early mass, she abstracted from her board, and carefully knotted in the corner of her handkerchief, twenty-five cents. With the airy feeling of a millionaire who need take no thought for any morrow this side of Doom's Day, Mrs. MacIlroy donated five cents at the church door and be-

stowed another five upon the inside collector. She securely fastened the remaining nickel and ten copper cents in her bank—the corner of her handkerchief. And when mass was over, and all her special petitions pleadingly put up to a God who could not help but hear, she joyfully, with beating heart, took her way to the Greenwich Emporium.

She staggered the moment she entered the door—for where the picture used to be, a blank wall cruelly stared at her!

"Where—where—is—the picthur?" she gasped.

There was some pain in the proprie-

tor's eyes, and hesitation in his voice, as he replied:

"Dat picture vas bought yesterday and taken away."

The light seemed to pass out of Mrs. MacIlroy's life, that Christmas morning. Christmas Day, New Year's Day, all days, were now alike to her!—blanks!—blanks! With fumbling, uncertain fingers, she, after much time, succeeded in retying the knots that she had undone from the little treasure that her handkerchief held, and then she started for the door.

Stopping for a moment in the doorway, however, and steadying herself by grasping the jamb with one hand, she said, in a weak voice:

"God grant ye a Happy Christmas, Mr. Bum."

Nancy reached home safely—how, she never could rightly recollect. In her memory, that journey was just an aching blur.

Into the armchair that Jimmy had bought her she sank with a sigh—a sigh in which seemed concentrated all the pain of all the days—both the painful days that were, and the days of pain that were now to be. Life held nothing now worth living for. She remembered how, on that dark day when the rugged coast of Donegal faded from her view, she had felt as if life were snuffed out; the same awful sinking of the heart seized her now and she thought she—

"Glory to God!" she suddenly cried, with a cry of joy that stung her heart as sharply as would a spasm of anguish.

"Tell me, what are my eyes lookin' at on that wall forninst me, Jimmy *asthor machree?*—or are they lookin' at nothin'? Is it just a timplation that the Bad Man's puttin' before them, to torture me? Tell me, darlin'—tell me!"

"Mother dear," said Jimmy, laying a tender arm round her neck, "they're lookin' at the greatest picthur that me-self or Jane ever saw in all our lives, which come in here half an hour ago for you—with no name, exceptin' this card, which says:

*"For Jimmy MacIlroy's ould Mother—from one who had a sweet ould Irish Mother himself—Wish-in' her a happy Christmas—an' forty o' them."*

"And there's a bit o' paper pasted over the ould name of the picthur (which I suppose was fadin') an' the name printed new, with ink, (to make it aisy for bad scholars to read)—an' Mother, Mother, dear, it's none other than the Hills o' Mourne! Glory be!"

For a tedious minute, with what seemed to Jimmy an uncomprehending stare, Nancy MacIlroy stared at the picture on the wall. Then, before Jimmy could prevent it, she slipped helplessly from her chair, falling forward in a loose heap, her face between her arms which reached toward the picture.

When Jimmy, alarmed, stooped to raise her, she was muttering in an ecstatic, but broken voice, "Now Glory be to God this holy Christmas mornin'!"





# The Crazy Man

BY ELLIOTT FLOWER

Author of "The Guilty Man," "The Best Policy," etc

BELDEN, the lawyer, listened to the story in silence. Belden was a young man, of limited practice as yet, of still more limited means, but considered by those who knew him as a coming man in both law and politics.

"You're crazy!" he announced abruptly, when the tale was finished.

Connor, the prisoner, was provoked, to use no stronger term.

"This aint a joke!" he declared, with much heat.

"You're crazy!" repeated Belden.

"I got as good a head on me as you have!" retorted Connor, "and I aint said a word that aint true!"

"You're either crazy or guilty," was Belden's deliberate and significant rejoinder.

"Oh!" exclaimed Connor, comprehending at last; "Oh, well p'raps I am crazy."

"But I don't want the case," added Belden.

"What!" cried Connor, startled. "Don't it look good enough?"

"I should consider it rather desperate," said Belden.

"Well, aint desp'r't cases been won?" demanded Connor.

"Besides, I don't like it," pursued Belden, ignoring the question.

"I got money," insinuated Connor.

"I don't want to get into criminal law," persisted Belden; "I'm building up a civil practice."

"Then what are you doin' here?" snorted Connor indignantly.

"You sent for me," replied Belden, "and I came to see what you wanted."

This reminded Connor that Belden had been recommended to him as probably the smartest man he could get to take the

case, which recommendation coincided with Connor's own view. It would never do to let him get away.

"Sure, I sent for you," he said. "I want you to get me off."

"I wouldn't touch the case for less than a thousand dollars," asserted Belden.

Connor winced. That was a lot of money. A young lawyer, not yet fairly started on his career, ought not to come so high.

"And," added Belden calmly, "it might easily run to more than that after we get into the case. No one ever knows how such a case may drag along or how far it may have to be carried."

Connor reflected, frowning. Then his brow cleared suddenly.

"Make it two or nothing," he suggested.

"What do you mean by that?" demanded Belden.

"Two thousand if you win, nothing if you lose," explained Connor. "It's worth two thousand to me to git off, but I don't like to pay for goin' to jail."

"Oh," returned Belden, "you want me to take the case on a contingent fee."

"I guess so," agreed Connor doubtfully. "That sounds like what I want, but I aint sure."

"I wouldn't consider less than five thousand as a contingent fee in a case like this," said Belden.

"You want all the money there is," complained Connor.

"I don't want the case," retorted Belden.

Connor, being human, was the more anxious to secure Belden because of Belden's reluctance, and, after all, money was of no consequence compared with

liberty, however preferable it might be to other things.

"Make it five," agreed Connor quickly.

It was Belden's turn to hesitate. He really did not want to take the case—he was quite honest in saying that he did not wish to become identified with the practice of criminal law—but five thousand dollars was an alluring sum to him just then. It would be contingent, of course, upon success, but it was worth striving for.

"I'm good for it," suggested Connor.

"I know you are," returned Belden.

"Git me off," said Connor, "and the cash is yours."

"All right," acquiesced Belden, after a moment of further reflection, "I'll try it."

"Then it's settled," declared Connor, satisfaction in tone and facial expression.

"Not quite," remarked Belden. "We'll put it in writing."

Connor seemed hurt. "Why, I'll hand it to you right the minute I go free," he said.

"You will," agreed Belden dryly, "if you have to."

"It aint like I didn't have enough to do it easy," argued Connor.

"Oh, you've got plenty," admitted Belden, "but you hate to let go of any of it. We'll put this in writing."

Connor was sadly perturbed, but only for a moment. Then a little gleam of shrewdness shot from his eyes, and he acquiesced cheerfully.

Belden put the arrangement in the form of a demand note for five thousand dollars, conditional upon acquittal. Belden, knowing his man, was taking no unnecessary chances. Connor was well able to pay, but Connor did not like to pay anything he could avoid paying, and it would be especially hard for him to pay for freedom after he had secured it. He was a bachelor. It was generally understood that he had remained a bachelor because he was so "close" that no girl would risk a matrimonial voyage with him. Perhaps, too, his crabbedness and violent temper had something to do with this. Anyhow, he was not popular with his neighbors. Indeed, his reputation was such that he found it difficult to secure

the help he needed to operate his farm in the western part of the county. It occasionally happened, according to report, that the men he employed had difficulty in collecting the full amount of their wages. So there was reason for Belden's determination to put the agreement in a form that would enable him to enforce payment.

Connor, having agreed to the contingent fee, seemed entirely satisfied and signed the note with no apparent reluctance. "Now, git me out!" he exclaimed, when that was settled.

"We'll see about bail at once," said Belden. "Fortunately, you didn't kill Paisley."

"No," returned Connor, "I didn't go for to kill him."

"Perhaps not," retorted Belden sarcastically, "but you came so near it that we're going to have a hard time convincing a jury that there wasn't murder in your heart. However, you didn't kill him, so we can get you out on bail."

However unpopular a man may be, he can always furnish bail up to the point that he is able to protect his bondsmen, and Connor had the cash and property to protect them. There was also in his favor the fact that, although personally unpopular, he was but little worse off than his victim in that respect. It followed, therefore, that he soon found himself closeted with Belden in the latter's office for a further conference.

"We'll go over the whole affair again," said Belden, "and see what we can make of it. First, you certainly made a vicious assault upon Paisley. There's no getting away from that fact, so far as I can see."

"Well," admitted Connor, "I pounded him up with a piece of fence-rail."

"Why?" asked Belden.

"His face don't look good to me," replied Connor.

"What!" cried Belden.

"I never did like his face," explained Connor, "so I thought I'd change it. And," he added contentedly, "I did."

"Good!" exclaimed Belden. "Excellent! Just talk like that on the witness stand and we'll have you in an insane asylum before you know it."

Connor straightened up with a jerk.

"But I don't want to go to no asylum!" he cried. "That's worse'n jail."

"But easier to get out of," suggested Belden.

"I don't want to git in it!" objected Connor. "That wouldn't be gittin' me off."

"Certainly it would," returned Belden. "It would be an acquittal, so far as this crime is concerned, on the ground of insanity. What they did with you after that would be another matter."

Anxiety was reflected in Connor's face. This was a view of the affair that had not occurred to him. "You couldn't claim no money for a job like that!" he protested.

"It would be acquittal," replied Belden calmly, "and the note becomes due and payable immediately upon acquittal. What they do with you after that has no bearing upon our agreement and is no concern of mine."

Connor's impulse was to repeat, so far as circumstances would permit, the assault upon Paisley, but he restrained himself. He could hold his temper in check when it was clearly to his advantage to do so, and he had no mind to make his predicament worse than it was already.

"But," pursued Belden in the same calm tone, "I have no intention of abandoning you in any such way. It may not be necessary to send you to an asylum at all; many a man has escaped both the penitentiary and the asylum on such a plea; it depends upon circumstances. If you do have to go, it will be only for a brief time. There will be no trouble in having you declared sane—quite recovered from your dementia—almost as soon as you get there. But I want you to understand the situation, Connor," he added significantly; "that's why I have emphasized the matter. Now we'll get back to the case. You and Paisley have had trouble before, haven't you?"

"Well, we aint been friends," admitted Connor.

"That's nothing," returned Belden, carelessly; "that could be said of your relations to the whole neighborhood. But you and Paisley have quarreled."

"Not exactly what you'd call quarreled," explained Connor. "He's a mean dog, and I 'most always tell him so when

I see him, but I wouldn't hardly say we quarreled."

"Good!" exclaimed Belden. "Fine! That's a good crazy way to look at it; you stick to that. Does he ever have anything to say to you?"

"Well, he said a-plenty the time I sold him a spavined hoss," replied Connor. "I didn't reckon there was anything he could say that he didn't say."

"But you didn't quarrel?"

"No-o," answered Connor, after due reflection, "there wa'n't no reason why I should quarrel then, havin' all the best of it. I let him talk. But he's a mean dog. Why, he sold me a cow that was condemned by the live-stock inspector in less'n a week."

"Didn't you quarrel then?" asked Belden.

Connor shook his head. "There wa'n't no reason for him quarrelin' that time," he explained, "and he only laughed at what I said."

"So, according to your idea, you never quarreled?" persisted Belden.

"Well, we had some words over the fence," replied Connor. "Now I think of it, p'r'aps we quarreled some then. He said I'd fenced in a slice of his land, and I said I'd only took back what he'd stole from me before. He threatened to go to law about it, but he never did, and I kep' the land."

"Both good and bad," commented Belden. "Your point of view is crazy enough to help some, and the fact that there had been bad blood between you for a long time is a detail that can be used to advantage; but, as near as I can make out, you have had all the best of it so far, and that's bad. You still hold the land in dispute. That seems to leave little provocation for the assault—nothing, in fact, except a general hatred of the man."

"That's it," admitted Connor, as if no other explanation were necessary. "I don't like him; I don't like his face. That face looks like the devil to me when he gits the upper hand. I can see it leerin' at me and laughin', and them red whiskers looks like a fringe of flame. I don't want to see no such face as that this side of—"

"Great!" Belden broke in enthusiastically. "Go on!"

"That's all," returned Connor. "I got to seein' it in my dreams after the Lizzie Koover trouble—"

"Hold on there!" interrupted Belden. "What's this about Lizzie Koover? Is there a woman in the case?"

"Why, I don't know that you'd say she was exactly in the case," answered Connor, "but it's what he told her that was the last straw on the elephant's back."

Belden let the reference to the elephant pass without correction, deeming it an immaterial detail, and urged Connor to tell him about Lizzie Koover.

Connor, after some hesitation, confessed that he had considered the advisability of marrying Miss Koover, who was a spinster of uncertain age and some property. He had even gone so far as to call upon her twice, which was a remarkable demonstration of interest for a man of his unsocial disposition and habits.

"Then Paisley butted in," he complained, "and it was awful the way he talked about me. Why, he said there was a racket at my place once that brought the neighbors from all over, and they had to have me arrested for torturin' the eagle on a silver dollar by squeezin' it so hard. He said he didn't want to do me no injustice, and was willin' to admit I didn't think any more of a quarter than I did of my immortal soul. That's the way he talked to her—made her think anybody that married me would have to live on a dime a day and take in washin'—and then he laughed when I told him what a mean skunk he was. I never did like his face, but it was a reg'lar nightmare to me after that."

"If you had attacked him then," reflected Belden, "there would have been more excuse for it."

"He's a big man," explained Connor simply, "and I didn't have no fence-rail handy."

"It is the apparent premeditation of the later attack that makes it hard," pursued Belden. "Still, the woman affair helps. Nothing so upsets a man as being slandered to a woman. It would have been a clear case of brain-storm if you had assaulted him at once. However, let's have the rest of the story."

"It's jest like I told you before," ex-

plained Connor. "That there leerin', mockin' face haunted me, and I knowed that some time I'd have to change it, but I didn't go for to do it when I done it. I didn't have no delib'rate plan. It come over me sudden when I see him on the road. I see him comin', with a face like a bad dream, and there was a piece of fence-rail right handy. It looked like Providence was at work, but I didn't figger too much on that. 'I'll give him a chance,' I says to myself, pickin' up the bit of rail like I wanted to save it for the stove. 'If he don't look at me,' I says, 'he can pass in peace. If he does look at me,' I says, 'I'll tell him what kind of a face he's got, and that's all. But if he talks back,' I says, 'I'll pound him good.' There aint anybody could be fairer than that, is there?"

"You think that's fair?" queried Belden.

"Sure it's fair," replied Connor. "He don't have to look at me, does he?"

"Fine!" exclaimed Belden enthusiastically. "Great! You tell it to the jury just that way. It's one of the finest insane delusions I ever ran across."

"It's sense!" expostulated Connor.

"Splendid!" cried Belden. "Go on."

"You act like you thought I was reg'lar crazy," charged Connor suspiciously.

"Of course," returned Belden. "Go on! Tell me what happened."

Connor hesitated. It might be all right to put in a plea of insanity in court, but it seemed to him that the lawyer was going too far in acting upon that assumption in their personal intercourse. However, it was not a time for him to be captious.

"Well," he went on at last, "he turned that monkey-face on me and grinned. That's what he done—grinned. 'Shut it off,' I says; 'I jest had breakfast.' That was fair warnin', but d'ye think he done it? No, sir. He opened up wider 'n ever. 'If I had that face,' I says, 'I'd use it for breakin' stone.' Then he come back, goadin' me on to what I was tryin' not to do. 'I don't need to,' he says; 'I'm goin' to have you breakin' stone before I'm done with you.'"

"Well?" queried Belden, as Connor paused.



"That's all," replied Connor; "I hit him then."

"And you certainly made a good job of it," remarked Belden. "To hit him with a club was bad enough, but you kicked him in the face afterward."

"Sure," agreed Connor calmly. "Where else would I kick him?"

"And you'd have killed him," added Belden, "if Dole and Coogan hadn't happened along and pulled you away."

"P'raps," admitted Connor, "but I didn't go for to do it."

"Never mind that now," returned Belden. "'Assault with intent to commit murder' is what they'll call it if they find you guilty, and that means the penitentiary sure. The crazy way you talk of it is a good point, though. Did you talk that way to Dole and Coogan when they pulled you away?"

"Well," said Connor, after a moment of reflection, "I asked them as a special favor to let me have one more kick."

"They'll be damaging witnesses," commented Belden, "but we may be able to get something out of them to help the insanity plea. How about your early life? Can we show that you were at all peculiar as a boy?"

"Well, no, not what you'd call peculiar," replied Connor thoughtfully. "Of course, I bit the old man's ear once."

"You what?" cried Belden.

"Bit a corner off the old man's ear," explained Connor, "but don't never try it. I aint had no taste for ears since."

"And you don't call that peculiar!" exclaimed Belden. "Why did you try it?"

"He was tryin' to lick me."

"What for?"

"Fightin'. I swapped jack-knives with a boy, and he beat me on the trade, so I licked him and took both knives."

Belden reflected. "That's about what you would have liked to do when Paisley beat you in the cow deal, isn't it?" he asked.

"Sure," answered Connor frankly.

"Well," said Belden, "we may be able to make something out of the ear-biting. Anything out of the ordinary helps in these brain-storm days, and there is certainly something unusual in a boy chewing his father's ear. What else?"

"Nothin' much," replied Connor. "I remember I didn't go to the circus once."

"What of that?"

"Oh, everybody thought it funny a boy wouldn't go to the circus when he had the money."

"And you had it?"

"I had money saved up, and the old man gave me some more. I'd been teasin' him for it ever since the bills was first put up; but told me to use my own."

"Why didn't you?" asked Belden, somewhat bewildered.

"What!" cried Connor. "Why, I couldn't use my own money, what I'd earned and saved, for no such foolishness as that."

"But you say your father finally gave you some," suggested Belden. "Why didn't you use his?"

"It wasn't his after he give it to me, was it?" retorted Connor.

"Oh, I guess you're crazy enough," declared Belden. "Just talk in court the way you talk to me, and we wont have much trouble. Did you ever have a bad fall?"

"No, not what you'd call a fall," replied Connor, "but I was kicked through the side of a barn by a mule once."

"Ah," commented Belden approvingly, "that's something. Did he kick you in the head?"

"He didn't kick me nowhere; he was a she."

"Well, did *she* kick you in the head?" asked Belden, showing some exasperation.

"No, in the stummick."

"Good enough for our purpose," declared Belden. "That's evidently where your brains are."

"You'll think a mule kicked you in about a minute!" exclaimed Connor wrathfully.

"Oh, no," was Belden's calm rejoinder. "You'll be very nice to me, because I'm going to get you off. You can't afford to be ugly with me, you know, because I'd welcome an excuse to throw up the case."

Connor subsided. He even smiled rather grimly. It was not pleasant to be treated in this way, but he had a little joke of his own to reconcile him to whatever he had to endure.



The legal fight was a long and a hard one, but Connor went free. There was the usual battle of experts, who proved that he was everything from a driveling idiot from birth to a man of perfect sanity and strong intellect, and there were scores of witnesses who testified to all sorts of sane and insane acts. Dig into any man's life, and you are sure to find peculiarities from which an expert can deduce anything he pleases. But it was Connor's own story, as told on the witness-stand, that did him the most good.

The assault was a particularly vicious and unjustifiable one, and Connor was personally unpopular. If his victim had not been almost equally unpopular, nothing could have saved him. The jurors felt that he ought to be punished on general principles, but it was difficult to reconcile such a brutal and causeless assault with any theory of reason or mental responsibility. If he had made a less thorough job of it he would have had less chance to escape the consequences. And his own story was held to be that of a man with insane delusions. Carefully indeed was this brought out by Belden in his direct examination, and the cross-examination merely added to the general effect. Connor's point of view was not that of a normal man, to say the least. His objection to Paisley's face was eccentric and unnatural, and the other details of the story, especially as he told it, showed a mind perverted. There were those, of course, who declared that he was vicious rather than insane, but the jury held otherwise, the instructions of the court being customarily and properly confusing.

So Connor went free. He was not even committed to an asylum—perhaps because no one was sufficiently interested to follow up that phase of the case. Paisley did not want to do it, for it would entail expense that he did not feel like bearing. He preferred to wait until he was fully recovered, and then see whether he could not do something in a suit for damages. The prosecuting attorney did not want to do it, for he lost interest in the case when he failed to secure a conviction, and he had many other matters demanding his attention.

So Connor, having been acquitted on the ground of insanity, was not even examined to determine whether he was still insane—a peculiar condition of affairs that is far from being without precedent in our glorious system of jurisprudence.

He walked to the door of the courthouse with Belden. There he grasped Belden by the hand and spoke feelingly.

"You done well," he said. "There aint a lawyer in the county that could have done better, and I wont forget it. Don't never think that I aint grateful. I'll tell everybody what a fine lawyer you are. Good-by! I'm goin' home now."

"Hold on a minute!" exclaimed Belden, holding tenaciously to his client's hand. "We'd better see about that note first. It's due now, you know. Let's go over to the bank and fix the matter up."

"Oh, yes, the note," returned Connor, as if he had quite forgotten it. "Sure! I don't want to be mean about that, after what you done for me. I'll give you five hundred dollars for that note."

"You'll what?" cried Belden, aghast.

"Five hundred," repeated Connor. "It was a good job, and I'll give five hundred. I don't want to be mean."

"But it calls for five thousand!" expostulated Belden.

"Sure," agreed Connor.

"And it's a demand note," added Belden.

"Sure," agreed Connor again; "but," he added, "it was signed by a crazy man."

Belden was too dumfounded for utterance.

"I'm crazy," Connor went on. "Anyway, I was crazy. You proved it yourself, didn't you?"

"But—but—"

"And the jury said you was right," pursued Connor. "A crazy man's note aint no good, is it? I might jest as well made it a million."

"Oh, all right," returned Belden, recovering his wits. "If you're crazy, I'll see that you're locked up."

"P'raps I aint crazy now," argued Connor, a shrewd gleam in his eyes seeming to indicate that he had considered all the chances. "The jury only said I was crazy when I banged Paisley, but I signed the note the same day I did that. Besides,

you can't get no money by shutting me up. I couldn't pay you if I wanted to then."

"The court," said Belden, "will allow a fee for services to an insane man."

"Sure," agreed Connor, "but it wont allow no five thousand dollars. That's why I'm offering you five hundred for the note."

"I wont accept it!" declared Belden angrily. "I'll sue on the note. That will show you up as an ungrateful dog, even if I don't get the money."

The characterization was enough to disturb a man of quick temper, but Connor's quick temper was always subordinate to his financial instinct, and he felt that he had the better of the argument.

"Well," he returned, "I can stand bein' showed up a good deal for five thousand dollars. You wont show up none too well yourself, suing a crazy man after trickin' him into signin' a note."

There was no issue of fact in the case. Both parties agreed as to all the material facts. Connor had signed the note, Belden had secured his acquittal, and the jury had declared him insane in the matter of the assault. There being no dispute as to the facts, the case was quickly presented, and the civil judge who heard it was troubled.

"Mr. Belden, of course, is entitled to a fee for his services, regardless of the question of insanity," he said, "but it is a question whether he is entitled to recover on this note. For a contingent fee, in such a case as this was, five thousand dollars may or may not be too much. With that the court has nothing to do. If the defendant was of sound mind when he executed the note, that settles the whole matter. If not, compensation must rest in the discretion of the court, and the court cannot take cognizance of any contingent fee agreement made with an irresponsible party. Owing to the risk assumed, a contingent fee may properly be very much larger than a straight fee for

the same service, but the court can figure only on the basis of a straight fee, in case it becomes necessary for the court to decide upon the reasonableness of the compensation demanded."

Connor nodded his head approvingly, and the judge frowned.

"The situation," pursued the judge, "is peculiar. The defendant, now here in court, is apparently of sound mind, but a jury in the criminal court has decided that he was insane the day the note was executed and within a very brief time of the actual signing of that note. It is a reasonable presumption that he did not regain his sanity so suddenly, and whether he has since regained it is a question that is not now at issue."

Connor laughed aloud. "I got you," he gloated, turning to Belden. "I knowed it when I signed the note. I had you comin' or goin'."

"How was that?" asked the judge, interrupting his opinion.

"Why, Judge," chuckled Connor, now in the best of humor, "if he didn't git me off he couldn't get a blamed cent, could he?"

"Apparently not."

"And if he did git me off by provin' I was crazy, which was the only way he could do it, the note was no good. I had him both ways."

"Did you reason that out at the time?" queried the judge.

"Sure I did," answered Connor, still gloating. "That's why I signed the note. I knowed I had the joke on him all the time."

"Judgment for the plaintiff in the full amount, with costs," announced the judge crisply. "That's about as good evidence of a sound, reasoning mind as I want. Why, Connor, you were saner than your lawyer."

Connor, in a daze, followed Belden over to the bank to settle up. "I wonder," he muttered, "whether I am crazy or whether I aint crazy. It's been proved by law both ways."



"Daughter-in-law capers through her paces to get back those books"

## "Covered"

BY KEENE ABBOTT

Author of "The Stranglehold," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY IRMA DEREMEAUX

THE Major was speaking to the city editor.

"Davis, if you have any young chap—not a cub, you understand—any young chap who goes where you send him and brings back the story you send him for, I wish you would let me know. Better have him see me right away."

Delivering these instructions with his customary jerkiness of manner, the white-haired man did not pause in his work of looking through a stack of exchanges. He took up the newspapers,

one after another, whisked the pages open, glanced them over and abruptly cast them aside.

Meanwhile the city editor passed out into the local room. It was now that time of day when a temporary lull is felt. The jar of machinery is hushed, and the nervous building, with tremulous floors and vibrating windowpanes, lapses into a brief interval of repose. An office boy, with shuffling feet, ambles along and flaps down a copy of the last edition beside each typewriter.

Reporters, at the long row of desks, spread open the damp pages that exhale a familiar odor of printers' ink and fresh news. Occasionally someone, with the delicacy of a bass-drum, confides to the whole office his profane opinion regarding the stupidity of compositor and proof-reader. Here and there a man comments, with much discernment, upon the merits of his own contributions.

Hastily scanning the assembly of reporters, the stoop-shouldered city editor made a scowling effort to compel his near-sighted eyes to focus through his spectacles upon the man he sought.

"Hargrave!" he called out. "Is Hargrave here?"

Everyone, save an old, worn-out reporter who was slightly deaf, stopped talking, and each person, except the most indifferent, moved his head with a sharp turn to inspect the room.

From the obscurity, at a remote desk, a voice answered:

"All right. Coming."

A young man strode forward, alertly slipping on a light, tan-colored overcoat as he did so, yet pausing, by force of custom, to snatch up some fresh sheets of copy-paper. He made a brief halt at a table where an office-boy, with a pin fixed to the end of a pencil, was spearing cockroaches that went scurrying away from the crock of flour paste, like pinches of brown dust.

Although the reporter was in a hurry, he had time to be amused. He smiled at the office-boy, gave the youngster a friendly tweak of the arm, and was rewarded with an expansive grin.

People liked Hargrave; even the crabbed old janitor once nodded with appreciation as he exclaimed: "That feller, he's got such a way with him!"

This opinion was shared by the city editor who now sent the young man into the chief's office. Two minutes afterward, when Hargrave reappeared, he was slightly mystified. It was so unusual for the managing editor to be giving out assignments!

The reporter felt that some particular importance must be attached to the work entrusted to him, for the Major had said:

"Of course, there may be nothing in the tip, but in any case, it must either be verified or disproved. I want you to run it down. Bag all the salient facts, and be prepared to handle the story in detail. If true, I want positive proof of it, even if you have to stay out on this story for two or three days."

Young Hargrave had not been able to respond to the assignment with his usual buoyancy. A species of stage-fright had come upon him as it had many times during his probation period as a "cub" reporter. Before long, however, the joy of the chase had got into his blood. His faculties quickened to a fever glow of eager acuteness, and he felt a warmth like a burn, both in his chest and in his face.

He swung into the shop of a florist, bought a pink carnation and slipped it into his button-hole, as a detail to help the impression of brisk freshness that he intended making upon an uncommunicative young woman. She was private secretary and stenographer to the Rev. Mr. Gordon, treasurer of the Associated Charities. With hat in hand young Hargrave was presently saying to her:

"I just ran in to leave these theatre tickets for Mr. Gordon, with my compliments. I hope he hasn't made other plans for to-night."

The solemn-faced young woman replied:

"If he were not out of town, I think he would be glad to use them."

The reporter feigned surprise; then, with an air of slight embarrassment, he delicately suggested that perhaps she, Miss Benton, might care to see Mr. Mantell in "King Lear." Yes, indeed, she would be glad of the opportunity, and Mr. Hargrave must not call it a warmed-over courtesy; no, it was very, very nice of him, she was sure.

Here was the friendly mood he had planned to produce, and he now waxed sympathetic in regard to Mr. Gordon's state of health. Miss Benton responded. Thus it developed that the treasurer of the Associated Charities stood greatly in need of relaxation. He had grown nervous, ill at ease, even irascible. For-



merly nothing irritated him; he used to be always in such gay spirits, but in these days—

The young woman suddenly stopped short, having roused herself to the fact that she was somewhat overstepping a rigid rule of hers neither to discuss her employer nor any of his affairs. Doubtless she would have been very much surprised had she known that already her tongue had betrayed the very facts that the reporter was especially eager to hear.

Before leaving the office, he was in possession of still another piece of significant information. A special session of the executive board had been called for that evening, and it was an even chance that the directors would take action on a certain matter which might impede Hargrave's work. He did not want "the story to break," as reporters say, until he had "rounded up all of the facts," in other words, he was preparing himself to anticipate everything that was going to happen, but he did not desire the event itself to take place until he was ready for it.

Irritated that the assignment had not been given to him earlier in the day, the young man swung upon the rear platform of a trolley-car and hastened to the office of Mr. Charles Tonquery, head of a wholesale paper company, who had done the Associated Charities the honor of allowing himself to be chosen president of the board of directors.

To await an interview with such a man is disheartening enough; to learn that he has left the building, gone home, gone to his club or gone, no one knows where, is still more disheartening. Hargrave cursed his luck; he cursed it again when he tore the pocket of his overcoat on the latch of the elevator door, and yet again when his hat blew off as he reached the street.

Better fortune, however, was his when he went to see two other members of the board. On a first trial he found both of them, one of whom, despite an air of impressive piety, had an insatiable appetite for questionable anecdotes. With a first glance at him young Hargrave knew this, but he did not know how he knew it, and having supplied a piquant

joke or two, he was rewarded by a definite confirmation of facts he had been seeking to verify.

The second man was an uncouth individual, blunt of speech, gruff in voice, coarse in manner, but in his office the reporter did not perch nonchalantly upon the desk. This time Hargrave sat demurely in a chair, and instantly his voice assumed a tone of respectful courtesy that won him information.

"Sheep!" was his private comment regarding both of these directors, but his opinion of the next man was touched with reverence. This director was a quiet-voiced surgeon of aggressive independence, abrupt precision of speech and inscrutable poise. To-day, in meeting him, Hargrave allowed himself a curt crispness of tone.

"I suppose you know," he said, "that the Rev. Mr. Gordon has suddenly dodged out of town."

The surgeon did not know it. Neither did Hargrave. It was merely a fictitious construction put upon the absence of the clergyman; but all the same, the startling directness of the comment brought results. Greatly to the satisfaction of the reporter, this reserved and reticent professional man was soon discussing both the treasurer of the Associated Charities and the financial affairs of that organization.

It was a brief and satisfying interview, yet even at the conclusion of it, young Hargrave was still uneasy, restless and discontented; for he knew that thus far he had not been able to convert mere gossip, mere hearsay and suspicion into authoritative news. He understood, of course, what the board of directors thought of a certain issue; likewise he understood what action they meant to take, but the most important link in the chain of his story was still to be supplied.

He told himself that it might be worth much to him to examine the bookkeeping of the Associated Charities. Well, then, where did the treasurer keep his accounts? At the office? or at home? Perhaps such a man would do some of his bookkeeping at home, in the seclusion of his own study; for there he could



make corrections, any number of corrections, without the assistance or the knowledge of his private secretary.

Well bethought! Hargrave summoned a cab, and twenty minutes later he was ascending the terrace toward a small residence, in a rather fashionable quarter of the city. Crossing the wide veranda, he was about to lift the bronze knocker, when the door swung open.

A quaint, grey little woman stood before him, as dainty as a miniature. She had a look of fragile porcelain, with that fluffy white hair of hers and that snowy fichu, all edged about with its crispy frills. Best of all, was the fine crumpled rose of her delicate cheeks. But her engaging smile, as she greeted Hargrave faded away, faded into a look of disappointment, and then came tremulously back again.

"Well, now—*well!*" (She laughed a little.) "Do you know that you only just escaped— Deary me, how people of my years do hate to admit that their eyes don't see well any more, and that their ears don't hear well! 'Pon my word, I did think that I should never live to see the day when I could no longer recognize the footstep of my own son, but here it's you, a stranger, instead of that big boy of mine! He's been out of town a few days, but he's coming home this evening. I was looking for him, expecting him, you understand, and that's the reason. Do come right in, wont you?"

It may be that young Hargrave did not feel quite at his ease, now that the time had come to betray the trusting confidence of this mother; it may be that his self-respect was lifting its voice in protest against the thing he was about to do; and if he still persisted in what he meant to accomplish, it was only because his greed for news had come to be much greater than the kindness which once was his.

The truth must be admitted, however, that on the following day, when he briskly strode into the office of his chief, there was a look of self-congratulation in his face.

"You asked for positive proof." he said. "Well, here we have it."

As he spoke something flapped down upon the desk with sounding impact. The bookkeeping of the Associated Charities had been placed at the disposal of the managing editor.

"Tangled arithmetic, I suppose," he commented with unwonted deliberation; commonly his word and action carried with it an air of military brusqueness. The staff called him the Major, and he looked it, even to the stiff grey mustache which seemed to have been chopped off rather than trimmed. "Tangled arithmetic," he repeated. "Juggled accounts! Well, have you been through them?"

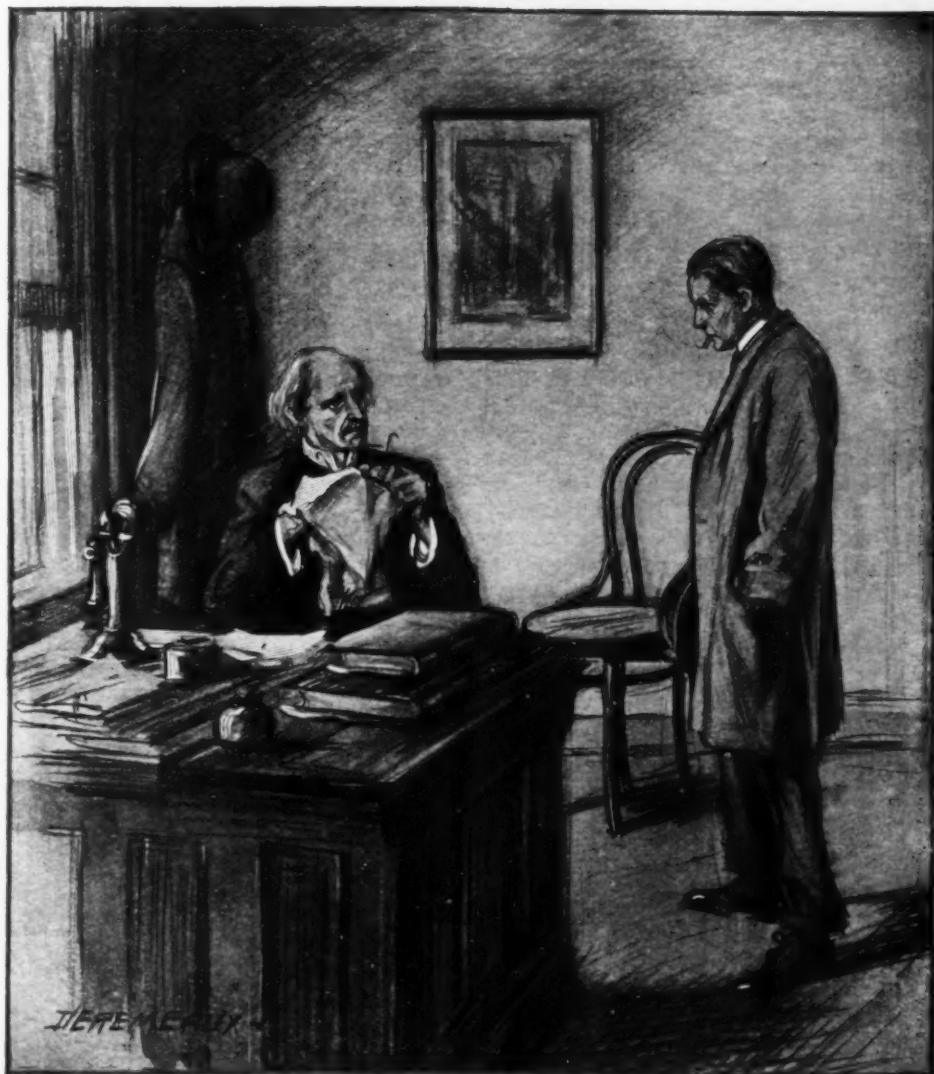
"A little," Hargrave replied.

"Have much trouble to land these?"

"It wasn't altogether easy, but of course, when I made it clear to her that spiteful people had been impugning the integrity—"

"*Her?* What her?" the Major interrupted.

"Gordon's mother it was, and as soon as she heard that the directors were going to appoint an auditing committee, she was keen to turn over the books to me—to *me*, you understand, for she thought I had been sent there by the directors." The Major said nothing, and the reporter went on: "Affecting sight, the pride and calm repose of that little old woman! Let her son's accounts be investigated; let it be done now, straight off! The sooner done, the sooner their absolute correctness would stop the wagging of malicious tongues. Well, but at the finish, in comes daughter-in-law. She finds out what has been going on, and then capers through all her paces to get back those account books. Tried her bewitching eyes on me. No go. Tried wheedling, tried dignity and queenly command. I don't fall for it. Tried pathos. Still no go. And finally—a regular stage scene! Feminine wit and wiles suddenly abandoned. She actually tried to grab those books away from me. A stunning, fashionable dame, this Mrs. Gordon; and besides, I always did think that anger gives a double sparkle to that brilliant type of brunette. Now that I've seen her at close range I don't wonder that the Rev. Mr. Gordon—"



"Not yet twenty-three and already a living grimace"

Hargrave laughed, and in his face was the look of professional elation which invites compliment. He must therefore have been a little piqued that the managing editor should have no words of adulation to offer.

Absently the Major had opened a ledger, and by and by he began to turn the thick, stiff pages. Slowly he turned them, slowly, one after another, with-

out looking at them, and his wrinkled hand, grey as cigar ash, moved with fumbling uncertainty. It could be seen that he had not fully recovered his strength, although more than a year had now elapsed since a grave illness, some valvular difficulty with his heart, had kept him for several months in the Talbert Memorial Hospital.

The managing editor presently asked:

"And is he in—pretty deep?"

"Rather deep, I think, and yet I don't know that I ever saw charitable funds so becomingly bestowed. One look at that Mrs. Gordon, with her snowy fingers so daintily a-glitter with jeweled rings; one look at the lacey grace of those bird-of-paradise hat plumes, and a hasty glance at the prodigal richness of the household appointments—well, well, a Tiffany setting for a pretty woman does come high! A modest salary well spent, no doubt, but that so much money should actually be spent on a man's own wife—oh, dear me!"

With a far-away look in his eyes the elderly man went on turning the stiff pages of the ledger, and then, as the voice of Hargrave died away, he gave a slight start, as though suddenly realizing that the reporter had talked and talked and was now done talking.

"The shortage, how much?" the Major questioned in the manner of an indifferent man who feels called upon to say something.

"Superficial investigation," the reporter answered, "shows that the Associated Charities is something like twenty-two hundred to the bad. Not more—" Hargrave put the tips of his fingers together and bowed in mock piety—"not more, let us pray," he said.

No youthful pose of cynicism was this. The Major knew it was not; he knew it was the hard, malicious jesting of those brought into close familiarity with almost every phase of vicious living. Solemnly he looked at the young man as he said:

"A pretty traffic!" Then a dry sound cracked in the room. The ledger had been suddenly slapped shut. The Major poked it aside with his shears, shook out a fresh handkerchief and wiped his fingers on the clean, white linen. And presently he was saying:

"Hargrave, I should take you to be between twenty and twenty-five years old. That right?"

Annoyed by the obvious lack of appreciation on the part of his chief, and disgruntled at being kept from his morning's work, the young man remarked with an impatient laugh:

"This important matter of my age—suppose we defer our discussion of that until some other time."

Ignoring the impertinence, the managing editor reflectively added:

"Twenty-five, perhaps; no, not that—not yet twenty-three, and already a living grimace!"

"Bad as that?" young Hargrave flipantly questioned.

For some moments the Major did not reply. He only drew a deep breath, and with familiar eccentricity of habit, puffily inflated his thin cheeks like a pair of gopher pouches; then, suddenly blowing out the air, he deliberately wiped his spectacles, put on his green eye-shade and drew one of the account books toward him.

"Well, get to your desk," he said. "Peck away at your typewriter. Don't keep the dear people waiting for their sensation. They must have this, and the Hazlet divorce scandal, and all the other oozy wallows that we can prepare for them. That's what we're here for, I suppose."

There was such a note of weary sarcasm in the quiet voice of the veteran newspaper man that the reporter was rather disconcerted. As he went out into the local room, among the animated clicking of typewriters, his ideas were still so muddled up that he was obliged to reflect much longer than usual before he could choose words sufficiently startling for an initial paragraph. Commonly oblivious to the nervous confusion of the office, he was to-day acutely aware of every noise. A bell began to strike, and he saw an emergency man step into the telephone booth to inquire the precise location of the fire. Presently a staff photographer, with camera-box in hand, came bustling through the room. He was being sent out to take a picture of a dog that was said to have saved a child from drowning. A cub reporter, at one of the desks, was solemnly laboring to make something sprightly and readable of the fact that the North End Improvement Society had elected new officers and wanted to have the trolley line extended to Wilford Avenue.

All of these commonplace details Hargrave took note of, for this was apparently one of those bad days when his mind refused to be driven to its work. But once the keys of his typewriter had struck off his first sentence, the remainder of the narrative flowed on with the ease and fleet precision habitual with men experienced in the preparation of newspaper "copy."

"Must have something good there, the way you're hitting it off," commented one of the older members of the staff, as he leaned upon the edge of Hargrave's desk.

"Nothing much," detracted the young man, with self-conscious disparagement. "Merely a preacher who's been kicking up a dust—the Rev. Mr. Gordon, L. L. D."

"Gordon, you say?"

"Yes, that's the name."

"Treasurer of the Associated Charities?"

"That's it."

"Whew! *Hal* Gordon gone wrong?"

"Even so, meh lord."

"Well, but—Good heavens, Hargrave, you don't mean that you're beating out a muck story on this!"

"Am I not?" the young reporter questioned.

"But listen," said the older man. "Have you told the Major? Don't you think you better see *him* about this?"

Herewith the solicitous reporter leaned over and mentioned something in an undertone which strangely affected young Hargrave. He straightened in his chair, he jumped up, he jerked the page out of the typewriter, folded it and brusquely shoved it into his pocket.

Shortly afterward he re-entered the office of the managing editor, but this time all his self-assurance was gone. An air of faltering humility had come upon him. He closed the door and halted there, as stricken with the uneasy bashfulness of a man grown ashamed.

"Well, sir, what is it?" the managing editor inquired, his shaggy eyebrows bristling as he cast a challenging glance over his gold-framed spectacles.

"This case," Hargrave began, and stopped short, not knowing in the least

how to express himself inoffensively. "To handle this story is not—not altogether—Do you mean for me to go ahead with it?"

Dryly, without again looking up, the Major said:

"Assigned to it, weren't you?"

"Yes, but I—excuse me—I didn't know, till now, that he—that Mr. Gordon was a relative of yours."

"My nephew; that's all. I paid for his education. Anything else you want to know?"

In the hush that had made itself felt in the room, Hargrave became acutely aware of a faint palpitation of floor and walls, an almost imperceptible throbbing; it was a continuous vibration caused by the swift and ponderous movement of the great presses in the basement that were now running off an early afternoon edition.

"I merely wanted you to know," Hargrave asserted, "that I am not going to write that story."

The Major gave a shrug, puffed out his cheeks, then quietly observed:

"Squeamish, eh? All right; drop it, then. Leave it to me. *I'll* do it. We who throw vitriol, you know, mustn't whine when we happen to get a dose of it ourselves. Scandal—we do so love scandal! We're soaked in it; we're in it up to the chin! And yet dodge this? No, we print the facts."

Hargrave stood mute; although he wanted to go away, he still remained. There was something both fascinating and terrible in the bitterness of this old man, and presently, when the thin lips had pinched themselves into a smile of cajoling sweetness, he was still more terrible.

He was looking steadfastly at two rectangular, upright expanses, side by side, above the desk, where the paper had not as yet faded to the rusty moss color of the remaining wall space. Two steel engravings, two portraits in wooden frames, used to hang there: one a likeness of Horace Greeley, one of Charles Dana.

"Men, both of them!" said the Major, and then, turning to Hargrave, he added with something like a wistful gen-





"You don't mean you're beating out a muck story on this?"

tleness of tone, "yes, but they—I got rid of them. They did not belong here."

The blind stare of vacancy was affecting him; some strange fancy had got hold of him, and with an air of deep humility he made a reverence to those blank spaces on the wall.

"Our ennobling profession!" he solemnly murmured. Then he laughed. His grey, wrinkled face took color, and soon that burnt-out voice of his had gone into a transport of praise for the newspaper he long had served.

This was not one of those that agitate so-called reforms, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing; it was not one ardently to support any kind of make-shift or counterfeit political issue; it

did not trim and truckle and grovel to meet the requirements of popular caprice; no, it was earnest and zealous, extremely zealous in its efforts to guide public sentiment with honesty of purpose. There *were* newspapers, he understood, that went in for editorial bickerings, windy sensationalism, insincerity, fakes, cheapness, pettiness and uselessness. But not this one; no, no, no! thank Heaven, not this one!

He had been speaking with modest pride, and with a tone so quietly insinuating that it seemed almost gentle. If one had not known him well, there would scarcely have been a suspicion that his words were seething with the acid of biting satire.

But there could be no mistaking the immense sneer of disgust when presently he exclaimed:

"Good Lord, what a moral pestilence! What a noxious mess of printers' ink!"

He fell silent, but presently his laughter again rasped forth like the crunching of a withered husk. Then, snatching up a lead pencil, he began to write.

Swiftly, line after line, the pencil went blackly and harshly scraping its way across the fair white paper. He was reporting the disgrace, the pitiless, pitiful truth concerning that young clergyman, his nephew, a fatherless boy who had been as a son to him.

Hargrave escaped from the room, depressed and saddened, with no energy



left for the work of the day. Ah, that terrible old man who was needlessly striking the thing he loved! What squalid heroism! What a blasting of the human heart!

The reporter began to walk up and down in the perpetual twilight of the long hallway, and the dusty, dry smell of the shabby newspaper office became an offense to him; the clicking of typewriters, the clack of telegraphy was a horror to him. And ceaselessly he asked himself:

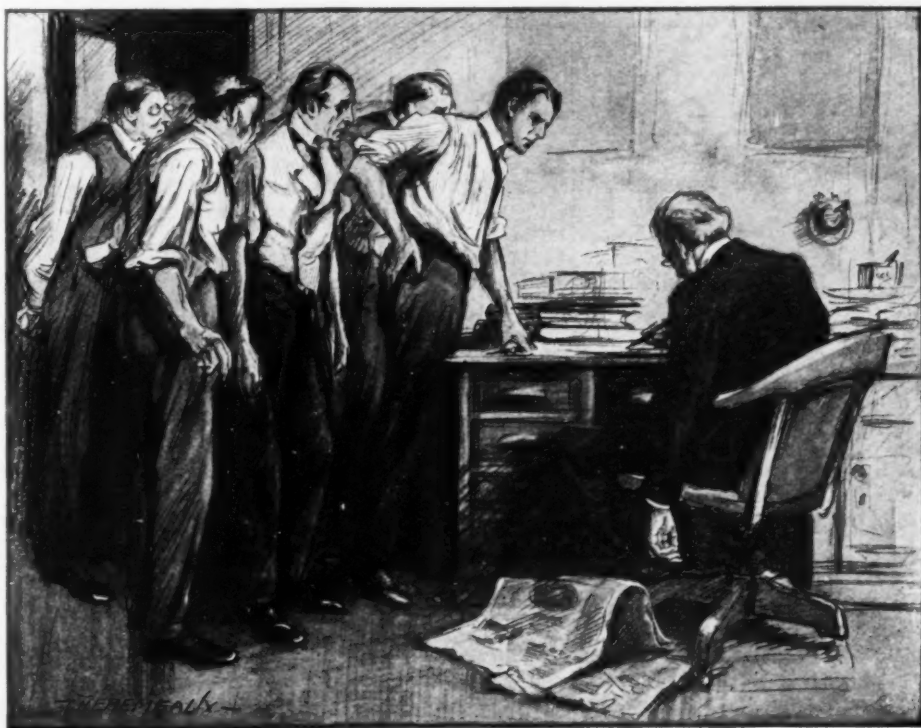
"Will I, some day, be like that? I, too?"

Yes, that was the indication; he knew it was. Only yesterday he had betrayed a mother's confidence; he had done it and been proud of it. The caddish effrontery of stealing those account books had seemed to him bright, clever, altogether a praiseworthy piece of reportorial shrewdness.

Formerly, as a police reporter, with a fresh eye for his work, he had grown

sick at heart at the wretchedness and poverty of the prisoners who turned their miserable eyes upon the magistrate. Afterward he had learned the trick of laughing at it, of turning it into amusing incidents, with never a touch of pity, and never an attempt at any real understanding of all that sorrow and trivial, heartbreaking tragedy. How quickly he had been calloused against it! How soon corroded in all his sensibilities! Gentleness and mercy had long ago been sacrificed to the brutal banality of a merchandise that was not even news.

"Well, and what is it all about?" he asked himself, and shuddered. It was as though that old man in there had become a mirror wherein Hargrave had seen his own destiny reflected. And of a sudden, the desire came to him to run away. He thought of his father and mother, back yonder on the old farm, and he wanted to rush home to them; he wanted to be with them, wanted to sit in their good presence and astonish him-



All stood mute, in wondering silence, at what they saw

self once again with the dear homeliness of their kind and gentle faces.

There was something so cleansing and even inspiring in the very thought of it, that courage was born in him to attempt a daring interview. He would see whether he could not dissuade the managing editor from demolishing all the future usefulness of that kinsman of his, the Rev. Mr. Gordon.

Hargrave approached the editorial door and knocked. There was no answer. He knocked again. Still no answer. Then he looked into the office and was amazed by what he saw.

The Major's expression was not the same as it had been; it was very, very different. Something gracious, you could see, had only now been happening to him, and it was this: old age and bitterness had melted out of his life. Rest had come to him. The weariness of his smile was gone; even the grey look of hard and rugged dignity had utterly vanished, and he was beautiful, for into his face had crept the serene tenderness of one who has seen much of human frailty and

sorrow, and felt deep the pang of pity.

At his desk the Major was sitting motionless, with a pen in his hand, as though he might only now have finished writing the check for a generous sum of money, made payable to that young man, his nephew, who had been as a son to him. Near it, on a blank sheet of paper, these words had been scrawled:

Hal, do try to be a good boy.

The managing editor was dead.

Swiftly the news took wing. Excitement swept the building. Desk men were summoned; other members of the staff hurried in, and all stood mute, in wondering silence at what they saw. But in the basement the ponderous presses continued their swift, dull and even throb.

During the confusion, young Hargrave fared forth with a cumbersome parcel under his arm; for he had secretly taken charge of the account books, the check and the note. And having delivered these as his chief would have directed, the young man knew his work was done, all done, and well done. The Major's assignment had been covered.

## The Girl of the Miniature

BY EDWARD STRATTON HOLLOWAY

Author of "The Great Too Much," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY EDMUND FREDERICK

**I** DON'T ask for a thing to happen," said Barcroft, sinking back in his deck-chair with the prospect of a ten day voyage happily beckoning. "Just this is good enough for me, for any sensible, hard-worked man: weather perfect, sky the color of blue silk pajamas, sea—" He cut himself short to add with emphasis—"I was praying that nothing might happen: some prayers never are answered! There's Jasper Grier!"

The well-known figure traversed the deck with a halting carefulness new to its vigor, one hand upon a cane, the other caught through his daughter's arm. His progress was slow, painful, and directly toward Barcroft. That young man caught

his breath; then realized that he was not so known a personage as the financier, and that if he kept quietly to himself he would probably escape unpleasantness.

The two took the chairs nearest his. The daughter—it must be his daughter—was plainly perturbed.

"Didn't I hand it back to you?" she was asking. "No? But I couldn't find it and it isn't in any of these compartments." As she explored a hand-bag, she was facing Barcroft, but suddenly she turned profile-wise. And at that he suppressed an exclamation of astonishment. His hand went into his pocket and from the shelter of his coat he compared the

face of the miniature he held, with the profile before him. They were counterparts.

At the instant the wind blew back his coat, discovering the miniature to the startled gaze of the lady herself.

"Why, this gentleman has my locket, father," she exclaimed. "Wont you get it, please?"

There are moments in life which one would not care to live twice. Jack Barcroft's hesitation was but for an instant: he placed the locket in her hand.

She thanked him and dropped it into her satchel. Then she smiled a recognition. "Oh, it's Mr. Payne. I did not recall you at first. Thank you so much."

Her father looked from one to the other, evidently disinclined to let the matter pass so easily; but a twitch of pain went over his face, and getting to his feet he remarked that he was afraid he would have to retire. "I shall no doubt have the pleasure of seeing you again," he said to Barcroft. His daughter accompanied him, leaving Barcroft to his thoughts. He had a sense of humor—and made large drafts upon it during the next half hour.

At the end of that time she came.

"We owe you a thousand apologies," she said, a locket in either hand. "It's marvelous."

"The mistake was quite pardonable," he smiled.

"But it's marvelous—the resemblance; and," she added with laughing insistence, "you have got to explain your possession of a copy of the miniature of me, painted only last month."

"And you have got to explain your possession of a copy of the miniature of my twice great grandmother—painted almost a hundred years ago. And, worse than that, you have got to explain your likeness to my great grandmother."

"Yes, one can see now, your case is old and worn and the ivory has the tone of time. But isn't it wonderful that your grandmother should have looked so exactly like me! She couldn't have been an ancestress of mine, too?"

"I fancy not. You wear your Empire gown in the picture as a revival of fashion, she by right. She was *of* the Empire

—just eighteen when Napoleon was proclaimed. He sat often at her father's table. It was he who gave her the name by which she was widely known—'Denise the Delightful!'"

"How delightful! No, she was not an ancestress of mine."

"But resemblances go by type as well as family," he suggested. "Certain features and expressions go with certain characters and temperaments: I'm sure of it. In this case you need not regret. She was a wonderful woman, the good fairy of all our fortunes, I sometimes think. I always carry her miniature. I have a superstition that as long as I don't part with it—"

"But you have parted with it."

"And I had a bad half hour; but now she will bring good fortune back with her."

She laughed, and they drifted back to their chairs. "I thought you had—just now as I came up."

His face sobered. "That was sufficient reason, but there are others still. By the way, you called me Mr. Payne, evidently thinking you had met me. That is not my name, and if I tell you what it is you will realize that you should not know me at all."

She flushed. "I really thought you Mr. Leonard Payne—at first. I am possessed of more than my share of woman's curiosity—who are you?" she asked with archness.

He reached out his hand—"If I may have my miniature."

She gave it to him. "Thank you, Mr. Payne."

"There are letters too—as charming as she herself, but—"

"Oh, I must see them."

"I'm afraid not."

"But—to one who would understand?"

"This portrait," he answered, "has been my protection from what St. Augustine calls the 'desirable calamity.' I am twenty-seven and have never fallen in love. She has so bewitched me that no one else would seem to do—after grandmother: though you look like her, Miss Grier, to the last hair. And if you *are* like her—"

An annoyed flush crept up her cheek.

He went on. "*Apropos*, remember a Mr. Romeo—who perished miserably! The cases are the same. Your family and mine are the Montagues and Capulets, not of Verona, but of New York. I am in danger—you are not. It's 'no fair;' I won't play. I've no notion to perish miserably: so—" he rose—"good-by."

"Mr. Payne—"

"I'm *not* Mr. Payne. You say you have your share of woman's curiosity. Kindly *lose* it somewhere—over the side would be a good place. I sha'n't gratify it. Good-by." And this time he went.

The conversation had recalled the letters to him. He had not looked them over for some time. He got them out and did so now, absent-mindedly thrusting them into his side pocket.

It was a few hours later. Barcroft stood with elbows upon the rail, his chin between his thumbs.

At his side:

"Mr. Romeo—alias Monsieur Payne!"

Jack's thumbs did not move, though he started: he waved a finger or two. "Please go away Juliet! Danger, danger, fair Capulet!"

"Father's below with two stewards in attendance—he sent me away because he said he couldn't swear with any comfort. Can you be cruel, too? Or do you need to swear? These two chairs are begging for us: I suppose the letters are this bulge in your pocket."

"I hope your father hasn't used up all the stewards: I want one to move my things to the quiet and peace of the steerage."

"You *have* got them in your pocket, Mr. Romeo." She touched the bulge.

He wheeled toward her. "Yes—Juliet!"

She fled then. That day he was left in peace—and a strange loneliness.

## II

He had whiled away an hour in the smoking-room that evening, but finally found himself standing at the door of the great saloon. Not far distant Janet

Grier stood talking in a group of young people. He returned her recognition but did not enter.

And just then a shudder passed through the vessel: the engines raced, the screw ceased its revolutions, the ship lost headway: panic came.

Barcroft was conscious of a hand upon his arm. "What is it?"

An officer came into the saloon. "No danger. Broken shaft. Ship's all right. Delay—sea perfectly smooth, best possible weather—for a broken shaft."

"Tell your father," said Barcroft. "I'll go and make sure."

At the signal of danger, Janet Grier had come to him and he had gone to her. He knew what it meant on *his* part.

## III

The following morning they quite naturally found themselves in their chairs with the packet of letters between them. Under canvas the boat was making a small headway; the clangor of repairs came up from below.

"She valued money only for what it was worth," —Jack was speaking of the woman of the portrait—"but she understood the value of independent circumstances and left her money wisely: it was the foundation of our fortunes. But that isn't all. We adore her memory yet— isn't it something that one's tradition should outlast four generations? Why? She was the very spirit of old romance, of beauty, charm and love. She was the great lady of her neighborhood: her husband became a great man of his time, and all he did was for her! Say what you will it's love, not money, that makes the world go round! 'When it's the right love, trust all and fear not,' was the quaint way she put it. There's never been an unhappy marriage in all our family—I believe she's our presiding genius yet! Fantastic, am I?" He laughed. "Oh, yes; but maybe you won't mind."

"And you have never been in love!" she retorted wickedly.

"I said that—yesterday," he gave back to her less lightly. "My love, 'the right sort,' would be a six cylinder motor car



at sixty miles an hour, I fear. It's all right for her who is in it with me, but not for those in the way. My love would be oblivious of all but itself—and her—at a mile a minute!" He laughed.

She laughed too, the fresh, communicative laugh of youth and charm. "But suppose it's one *blessed* nonsense? Who knows, Mr. Romeo? But we've forgotten *her*—the delightful one!" And they had!

Jack leaned against the arm of Janet's chair, the open letter in his hand.

"I fear I am very bad," it began, 'for I send this to you by Antoine, and papa does not know.'"

Jack laughed. "Papa seldom does know, does he?—till the knowing does no good."

"It is a wonder to me," he read on; —"that he could be so near the discour-



"You have got to explain your likeness to my great grandmother"

He untied the faded ribbon.

"When we think," he said, "that to untraveled Europeans, America even yet seems a wilderness and a gold mine, we can imagine how they felt *then*: so, though the first John Bar—there, I nearly let the name slip, didn't I? So, though *he* was welcomed warmly enough at first, when he lingered near the little chateau on the upper Seine, Denise's father became alarmed."

eous, and to you, a stranger: though, but certainly, you do not seem longer to me a stranger. *You* have seen to that!"—See how mischievous she could be—"They say of the men of France—many things—but you from across the seas, how can I say of *you*!"

"But read the rest of the dear little note yourself, for she seems to speak yet. See down here:

"I wish you could forget, because I



wish, and because the day seems so sad, though all the birds sing.' Do you think he would remember after that!

"That was the first touch of trouble, but read this—and this."

Jack leaned back while she read, and then, arm to arm, their eyes went together over this:

I don't know how to write, the words are all spinning and do not come to me. I must never see you any more, never see you ever again. My father has said it, and a daughter must obey. Or I must see you—always—as you have begged me, as my heart calls to me—

But leave him, disobey what he tells me to do, tells me because he believes it is best!

But you go! And I never see you again! That! Pity me, dear Mother of Heaven! If I but had a mother here to help and comfort me if I must let you go. I cannot—and papa will never change. Could I go away across the seas, to that strange, awful land—ah, but from there you came—how can it be awful? But what imports that? For you would care for me: that you have sworn, that I elsehow know. I know your dear love, you have embrace me, you have—kiss me—on the eyes and hair and forehead and lips. And I am yours. *Voilà!* I am no more father's or country's, or my own. We are one—ah, that is all; I know nothing more! The Blessed Mother has answer! I have the knowledge! I have Peace. Something, someone—my mother in Heaven, maybe the Mother of God herself—says to me: When it's the right love do not let it go away—trust all, and fear not. Come! Take me—for I am yours.

There was silence. But the arm which touched Jack's trembled.

"She—trusted all," Janet said at length. "She would not let love go away; that was good!"

"Yes, and—found all she hoped!"

"But her father?"

"*That* nearly broke her heart—at first. He would not receive her letters—not so much out of anger as because of his hurt that she had left him, clandestinely—eloped, in the vernacular. But she sent word through a friend who returned to France, and sent this—the miniature. She told of her happiness—except for his displeasure. It was enough. Then, later, she crossed the wide Atlantic

again and set her child upon his knee. Well—what more could she wish?

"And I am going there," he said presently. "There where she lived, in the little chateau above the silver river."

The girl caught her breath. "Yes, yes!"

"It is no longer ours, changes of time and rule took it from us, long ago; but my father is there now, we shall have it back, if we can."

#### IV

Repairs made, the ship moved onward, but still slowly. The days drifted past obliviously to two who sat together on a quiet portion of the deck. Janet Grier now knew to whom she talked. Jack had told her with the whimsical unexpectedness which piqued her interest in him: he had told her more than he suspected of himself, his life, ideas and aims—not always in words, often needless to the intuitions of modern woman for he himself was there for her to read.

One day as she and Jack sat together, Janet started. "There's papa!"

There he was—supported by two stewards. He did not see them, and presently, was quite content to sink into the first vacant chair—its ownership disregarded. Janet would have gone to him, but—

She and Jack had drifted back to the subject of the old romance.

"Was no letter of his—Jack the first, I mean—ever preserved?" she had asked.

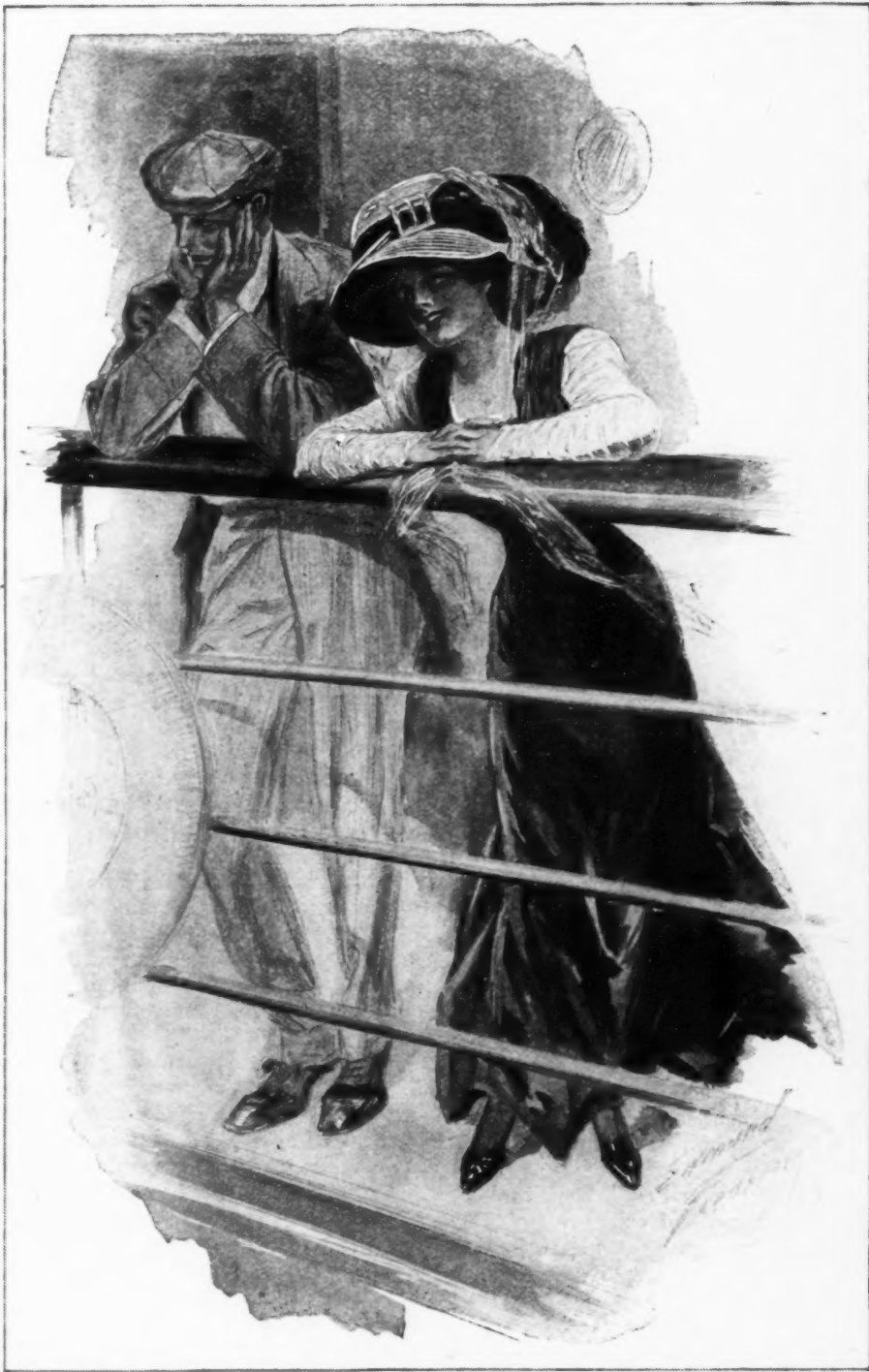
Now, as Grier settled back in apparent comfort, she repeated her question.

"One. I'll read it to you. You'll see where it fits in—just before the last she wrote. Listen:

My dearest One:

Just these few lines—there is no time for more: it's decision now.

It isn't easy to ask you to give up all—for me. Yet, why hard? If a man has faith in himself and in the woman? If he believes he can give her the greatest happiness in life. I can do this because—but words won't tell it. Love creeps on us—till it has us fast. Then we know it, exult that the great thing has come to us—if we take it! Winning, mischievous, womanly, adorable Denise, will you take it? It has been a battlefield, will you



"Mr. Romeo—alias Monsieur Payne!"

marry me on the field of battle! I have friends, I am ready—may I come?

I met your father. I asked him for you, told him all I could do to make you happy. He would not listen, he forgot himself. I remembered he was your father, but when I persisted he attacked me. I only held him off, and then when in his fury I believe he would have killed me if he could, I well, I *batted his hat down over his nose*.

"What! *Batted!* Let me see that letter!" She caught it from his hand. "*You* wrote this!"

Jack nodded with immense satisfaction. "Didn't I! Great, isn't it? Means precisely what it says. That last part is exactly what happened, so the old story goes, but the rest was written to you—*my Denise, to you!*"

Her voice was ominous. "My name is Janet."

"I know. And if you think my chance use of 'Denise' means that my love is any pale reflection of the old romance—*try* me. You'll see, Janet, oh, *wont* you see!"

She sat silent with her woman's thoughts, the mystery of what might be. Then, quickly, "But—father!"

With one of his swift changes he was smiling quizzically now. "I thought we'd be coming to that soon. I meant you to: don't you see the parallel? He *batted* her father's hat down over his nose!"

She wrinkled her brows, wonderingly.

"That's just what *I'm* going to do."

Jack got out of his chair and shook down his trousers.

"What!" She, too, was on her feet now.

"Oh, don't worry. Batting his hat down over his nose is not going to hurt him." Then he added, gaily pointing the tip of his finger to each: "I'm going to take care of him—and you—and myself."

"Did you ever *try* taking care of father?" she asked dryly.

"I'm going to have that pleasure now,"—he turned upon her—"if you give me leave. You haven't done that yet. Will you?"

Her face was down: the foot of the chair she was twisting marred her shoe. Then she looked up. Her cheeks were

soft with color, her eyes were tender, but mischief lurked about her lips.

"*See what you can do to papa's hat,*" she said.

Despite daylight and possible observers it looked as if he would take her in his arms; but he drew back, grimly and walked over to Jasper Grier.

"May I speak to you a moment?" Jack asked. "It's quiet here—which is just as well. There's going to be an unholy row."

"Eh? That suits me: twelve days of this damned trap!" Then to Jack's amaze, he waved his hand—"Skidoo!"

Jack followed his eyes to see Janet's laughing face disappear around the cabin corner.

"That?" asked the old gentleman, significantly.

"Yes."

"Thought as much. Want to pay your addresses, do you? Go on, go on! They do it by the dozen—much good it does 'em."

"Worse. I'm going to marry her; she's going to marry me. But—my name is John Barcroft. I'm the son of Hugh Barcroft."

"That scoundrel!"

"Exactly what he calls *you*. But I'm not Hugh Barcroft; I stand on my own feet. My name is John!"

Jack learned, with admiration, a lesson in self control.

All but exploding with rage, purple in the face, Jasper Grier sat shaking: but beyond that expletive—nothing. Presently he spoke, so calmly that Barcroft stared.

"I allow for that fact—or I wouldn't be talking here. You have his audacity, Mr. Barcroft." He actually smiled. "Janet's of age: you announce *that* you are going to marry her: in *which* case—"

Barcroft raised his hand. "I've come to announce that I *wont* marry her—yet. I've told her so and said good-by—for the present. I get off at Gibraltar. But, later—it depends—"

"My first care is for her. You have given her every luxury: to-day I could do as much—but not to-morrow, maybe. You were about to say that if I married

her you would cut her off: and if I married your daughter my father would not only do the same but would do all in his power to ruin me—because of her. See what a nice pair you are! I've made money—I can make more; but my investments are in enterprises largely controlled by you or my father—you're both wide-reachers, you know—and I know. Between you, you could crush me, maybe; yes, scrunch me, maybe; and you would, maybe. It depends on me. You hate each other so that for once you'd work to the same end. I can beat you one at a time, I think. But both of you's a big job. Yet I think I can do it! I'll try.

"If you and my father beat me," Jack added—"it's all off with Janet and me. If I beat you—I'll take her, see? I'll be able to, then."

"A wireless upon the subject of those investments will leave here inside of five minutes," said Grier.

"You're late: mine went three days ago. I'm ready—good-by."

"Good-by. It'll be a squeeze for you. News to-morrow from Wall Street. This suits me!"

"Oh, by the way," Jack called back, "do you know anything about that little road through Dead Mule Pass?"

"Do you?"

Jack smiled. "It's called the P. D. Q. The curves in that road would buckle up a broncho. And the tracks—send down a load of skim milk and it would be butter before it landed. But—it's gone sky high recently—the few shares that could be bought—hence the P. D. Q., you know. Shouldn't wonder if it sold at eighty before it's done."

"Eighty! You don't follow the market very closely, Mr. Barcroft."

"No," dryly, "I anticipate it." Jack walked away.

Jasper Grier's eyes followed him as he went. "Eighty! He's crazy. But that chap knows something about that little road that I've got to know."

## VI

The two belligerents were giving the wireless people an unusual day's work.

Grier appeared to be in high good humor as he sat talking to his daughter, and his big laugh reached Barcroft as he strolled about the deck. Presently Jack met a young clergyman with whom he had often talked during the voyage.

"You're looking better, Father Jardine," he said. "This is doing you good!"

The other took an appreciative breath of the sea air. "It's put me on my feet again."

"But you're not giving yourself much rest," he said to Jack with the good priest's concern for others, as another message was brought up.

Jack excused himself an instant while he looked it over, and then laughed.

"I trust to the secrecy of your calling. I've a bit of a skirmish on with Grier."

"Grier!" he gave his shoulders a humorous shrug. "You have my prayers."

"Oh, he isn't bad. His daughter adores him, you will observe: that says something, doesn't it? By the way, I wish you'd let me take you over—I'll answer for your liking *one* of them at least. And—" Jack smiled again with an undercurrent of earnestness—"I have no objection at all to those petitions you spoke of just now; this *means* something to me. And, by the way, I have an idea that you *might* be called upon to marry me."

The other nodded with quiet comprehension as they went over, for Jack's devotion had been too apparent to escape attention.

It was when they rejoined each other an half hour later—for Jack had not remained—that, after a moment's talk, Father Jardine turned upon him sharply.

"Are you worthy of her?"

Jack soberly shook his head.

"That is better than easy affirmations," said the Father, presently.

"I'll let you look after me a bit—if you will."

The other reached out his hand.

"You are ready to accept new responsibilities—and you must have plenty, judging from your illness when you came aboard."

The priest flushed as if ashamed of his indisposition. "My church, St. Edward's, burned down two years ago," he said simply. "I've had to rebuild."



"Insured?"

"Oh yes, but it was old and of little value. I work in the poorer district. We've needed to enlarge, so we've built the basement and roofed it over."

"I see," laughed Jack. "St. Edward's needs a *top*."

"Yes, but that will come in time. I'm better now. My bishop caught me by the throat, as it were, and put me here. He was wise as usual, I find now."

VII

"May I sit down?"

Grier nodded, grinned, and sat back in his chair. "Well young man, do you begin to sense the squeeze?"

"Painfully." Jack filled and lit his pipe. "I'm sorry for you!"

Both laughed.

"You seemed to know something about P. D. Q. yesterday?" suggested Grier.



"I see," laughed Jack, "St. Edward's needs a *top*."

"You stay over for a good rest?"

The priest flushed again. "I'm afraid I'm disobedient. I'm going home by the next steamer—the voyage is all I need. Here comes another message for you."

Jack scanned it, looked it over and saw that Grier was now alone. "Well, the battle's on!" he said. "Good-by."

"Good-by, and good success."

"Sort of a dark horse. Nobody knows much. Why do *you* want to know?"

"Had some curiosity about it, that's all."

"Got any of the stock?"

"No."

"Oh." Jack's voice lost all interest.

"Old man Dorrance holds a block of the stock, I believe," said Grier, pres-



ently. "I suppose I could have it—if I wanted it."

"That so?" Jack said.

"But I'm inclined to think he's only a dummy."

"So?" Jack's dead interest appeared to be buried now.

"I made Dorrance an offer for it—just in the way of sport," said Grier after consideration.

"Sport? How much?"

"Twenty-eight."

"Twenty-eight, eh?"

"Declined," added Grier concisely.

"Going to offer him more—say double that?"

"What! Not on your life!"

"Would be declined too, I'm afraid. I had some talk with Dorrance before I came away. He has use for the P. D. Q. I believe." Jack rose and stretched his elbows. "Warm day! Think I'll sleep."

Jasper Grier, President of the L. I. and C. system, was quietly matter of fact. "You were right," he said to Jack a little later, "Dorrance has other use for P. D. Q. Look here, Barcroft, I've squeezed you—hard. And I haven't let up yet."

"I've noticed that."

"Yet you put me wise."

Jack laughed. "You're aware that I'm a stock-broker?"

"Keep it up." He nudged Jack humorously in the ribs. "How do you know?"

"Suppose I have use for the P. D. Q.?"

"You? Impossible. Still I see you're on the inside—learn what will buy it."

Later Jack handed him a message.

Grier read: "C. L. & X. offers sixty-seven."

Grier lifted his cap and drew his handkerchief across his forehead. Jack wondered if his illness had shaken Jasper Grier's nerve. But instantly he was answered.

"They can't have it—for that. I'll give seventy."

Jack asked: "How the devil was it that when you were planning a trans-continental extension—oh, don't jump, Dorrance knows that as well as you do—you left uncovered the crucial spot? The P. D. Q.'s nothing—but it's got

the franchise — right-of-way twenty miles wide!"

"Seventy. Wire!" ordered Grier.

Answer came: "C. L. & X. seventy-five."

"Eighty!" jumped Grier. "Hang 'em! No, eighty-five."

"I accept. It's enough."

Grier turned his embattled face toward Barcroft. "What in—you!"

"I am owner of P. D. Q." said Jack. "I'll take it in the stock of your road at a hundred."

"Done!" cried Grier.

And Grier was game. He broke into his massive laugh. "Yes, by George, 'Done.' I didn't mean it that way but 'done's' the word. Young man, I want you. Our road can't do without you! You bet you can have it in our stock at a hundred—or anything else you want!"

"Now something else," said Jack, "Some one. Janet—I can take care of her now. May I have her?"

"She says 'Yes?' Should think you *could* take care of her! What did you pay for P. D. Q., anyhow?"

"She says 'Yes.' I campaigned for her in advance—as I did P. D. Q. For that I paid—ten!"

Grier roared.

"If you can make her as dear as you did P. D. Q., take her!"

After a few moments Grier inquired: "And what are you going to do—about *your* father?"

"I'm going to turn Janet loose on *him*. She'll conquer him as she did me—and you!"

"She will knock the heads of two obstinate papas together till they make up," cried her voice behind them.

"There's Father Jardine," urged Jack. "See, he's smiling. Come!" He slipped something into Janet's hand.

Her fingers closed around the golden miniature of Denise and her words came back to Janet: "When it's the right love, trust all and fear not."

"Yes," she said. "Come."

That night Father Jardine, down in his stateroom, stared at a cheque. His face grew radiant. "The top" would go on St. Edward's at once! Father Jardine slipped quietly down upon his knees.



## Blue Blazes

BY H. B. MARRIOTT WATSON

Author of "Gallopig Dick," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY HERMANN C. WALL

AFTER Senator McBain had made his famous speech on the policy of the administration in Tanong he was the recipient of many congratulatory letters.

From Omega, which had rejoiced in the honor of his patronage for thirty-five or forty years, and was the chief city of the state which returned him, came a blare of praise. In the Second Methodist Episcopal community, of which he was a member, feelings were stirred to such an extent that it was proposed to meet him with a brass band at the depot.

An austere, solid man of business was Angus McBain, with dour Scots blood in him, as you may tell from his name. He was born East, but had spent the best part of his life in the Middle West. McBain's Stores, as everyone knows, may be

found in ten states, and they pushed Angus McBain into politics.

A hard-headed man, McBain, with good judgment in business, and a resolution to back it up. He knew his own mind, and stuck to it, never deviating from a purpose until it was achieved. He worried his opponents out of their resistance; he was a "stone-waller;" he was Fabius Maximus Cunctator. He never forgot an idea, and he had infinite patience in carrying it out. He was a perpetual source of annoyance to his own party, as well as to the other. He asked inconvenient questions; he took up inconvenient attitudes; he espoused inconvenient causes. That of Tanong was one of these. No one wanted to hear of Tanong. Everyone was sick of Tanong. The

rebellion, or war, in progress there, (call it what you will according to your color) had exasperated the people and worn out the endurance of even the newspapers. Reports from Tanong did not receive any special prominence; they were not displayed; they were tucked away in corners at the foot of columns, in type that didn't matter. Tanong had bored the American public. They were not getting anything for their money out of it, and anyway it was a long way off. There had been a time when scareheads had been devoted to the proceedings of Farao, but that was when his insurrection was in its prime, and no one knew what would happen. Everyone knew what was happening now, and would go on happening—skirmishes and encounters and sallies of a dull, unexciting nature, surprises on both sides, for an indefinite time, and then perhaps the end. The end would probably be honored with a little larger type when it came. Private letters reaching the States gave indications that even the Thirty-Eighth Infantry was tired of chasing Blue Blazes, as Farao was very improperly styled.

This was the state of affairs when Senator McBain moved. He had not had his hands on a first-class grievance for months, and here was one, not quite ready made, but of good promise. His attention was first attracted to Tanong, of which he had only vaguely heard before, by a letter from Hong Kong written by a member of the Second Methodist Episcopal Church who was visiting China for business purposes. This man, one Colborn, a dyspeptic, respected and thoroughly orthodox member of the Church, had made inquiries in Hong Kong and elsewhere, and he had heard sad reports of affairs in Tanong. He asked the Second Methodist Episcopal at Omega if they were aware of what was going on in the island in the name of civilization and with the sanction of the United States. This drew the attention of Senator McBain. He had always understood that the United States of America under the proud stars and stripes stood for Freedom, for Responsible Government, for Democracy, for the new conditions of the world as against the

old, time-worn, effete traditions of Europe. He examined the statements in Colborn's letters, which were inspired with a genuine humanity. Some of the charges were categoric; their gravamen was derogatory to the honor of the United States. One Jonggo had been taken prisoner and tortured into a confession (probably false) as to the details of a conspiracy against the foreign Government. Item: three natives had been shot at a station called Ojaga, without trial, on a vague charge. Item: the women and children of a tribe under the rule of the chief, Farao, had been driven into compounds and had there died like flies. Item: Farao had been (without specific details) unjustly treated for his merely patriotic movements in respect to the island, and was naturally in rebellion and giving General Fortis trouble. Behind all, as Senator McBain clearly saw, loomed the fact that the greater principle—on which the constitution of the United States is based, namely, the right of free people to govern themselves—was being over-ridden with rough-shod heels. Senator McBain unlimbered and opened fire.

There was a Tariff crisis on, but that was of minor importance. The Senator was like a certain man who had a standing grievance against the way in which the cuisie was managed in his club. He worried the committee with complaints all the time, and on one occasion when a general meeting of members was called to consider a grave financial crisis in the affairs of the club, he attended. When the opening statement by the Chairman had been made, the situation set forth, and a certain course of action proposed as a remedy, the meeting was invited to express its opinions.

"I should like, Mr. Chairman," said the malcontent, rising, an Irishman without a sense of humor, "to make a complaint about the way the potatoes are cooked in this club!"

Well, McBain just got up to complain about the potatoes. That is to say, he delivered a speech on the iniquities of the United States' policy in Tanong, with especial references to General Fortis, the commander of the forces in that

island. It was, as the *Omega Herald* declared, "a weighty speech, inflamed with just indignation, defying response, and emulating Demosthenes and Cicero in its Philippic intensity—"

Senator McBain was much pleased by this description, and had a thousand copies of the *Herald* distributed in suitable places—one of which was the White House. But his real reward came from his post bag in the first place, and from Omega in the second.

Nice, kind, sentimental people from all over the country wrote him enthusiastically gratulatory letters; he was the prey of the autograph hunter, and smilingly signed dozens of photographs for sale at charity bazaars. This was agreeable enough, but his public reception at Omega was even more satisfactory. It was, as has been hinted, a brass band affair, with the Second Methodist Episcopalians in force, and it included a speech from the hotel in which the Senator took refuge ere his ultimate flight to his comfortable suburban house in Omega. He stood at the window surveying the thousands before him, many of them earnest church workers—more, amiable idlers in search of a "sensation." In his hand he held a newspaper. It was the moment of Senator McBain's life. He rose to that greeting and that reception.

"Is this to go on?" he shouted, brandishing the newspaper in his hand. He pointed to scareheads. Senator McBain, it seemed, had raised the Tanong question once more into the first-class dignity of large type. An opportune movement in the tiresome game between General Fortis and Farao had been cabled from Allay. "Is this to go on?" shouted the Senator. "Seven prisoners shot while trying to escape—a village raided and the women and children seized while their husbands and fathers were shot down. I ask in the name of the United States, in the name of Washington, in the name of Freedom, are you going to allow this to go on? What did we fight the South for? Was it for this, to butcher innocent people struggling for their righteous freedom? To throw their families into jails? We spent hundreds of millions of dollars, and lost thousands

of lives to put down slavery in 1862, and we are spending millions of dollars and good lives to-day in making slaves in Tanong. Are you going to stand it?" A negative burst in a roar from the crowd; their enthusiasm had been fired by his and answered it; and the culmination of emotion was reached in the quotation from Lowell's stanzas on Freedom, with which the Senator concluded his speech.

They are slaves who fear to speak  
For the fallen and the weak;  
They are slaves who will not choose  
Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,  
Rather than in silence shrink  
From the truth they needs must think;  
They are slaves who dare not be  
In the fight with two or three.

Following upon this magnificent testimonial came the action of the Methodist Episcopalians in Omega. A resolution of congratulation and thanks to the Senator was passed unanimously, and steps were taken to carry on the agitation. It was then that the Senator made his dramatic announcement. He had made up his mind to visit Tanong and personally to investigate the conditions on the island.

Angus McBain was a shrewd man of business, and he had noted the advance of Japan in the occidental markets. He had come to the conclusion that if people were going to buy flimsy Japanese goods they might as well buy them from him. It was time, he decided, to attach a Japanese department to each of his stores, and get ahead of his rivals by intelligent anticipation. A personal visit to Japan would not come amiss in this connection; and business and philanthropy could therefore march together. While in Japan he would take the opportunity of going south to those dependencies of the United States which had been troubling his conscience. In his own mind the Senator thought that the United States ought to slough this caudal appendage altogether, but he would report at length on a close examination.

From Tokio he went to Hong Kong, with Helen, his daughter, to keep him company, and from Hong Kong a tramp steamer took them to Allay, where Gen-

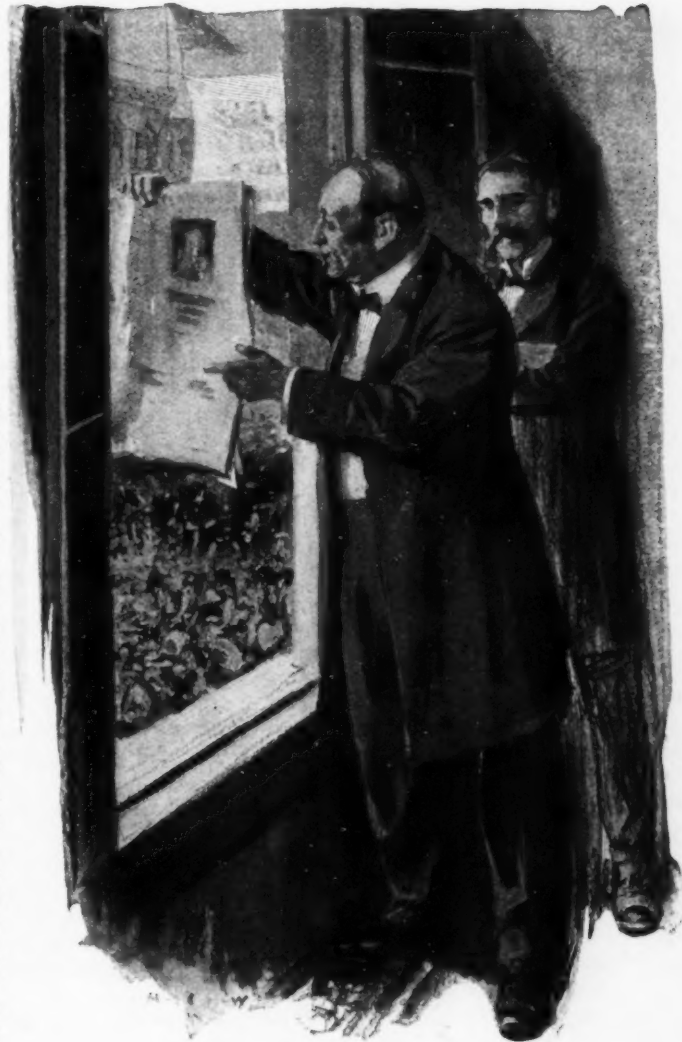


eral Fortis was already growling at the reports which he had received by his mail. There was a wise, bold man at Washington, who, however, never foresaw, one must suppose, the actual course of this narrative. Leading papers had paid some attention to the reception given to Senator McBain in Omega, and as a matter of fact, reports of his speech were in the mail over which General Fortis was growling. The reports had reached Washington in due course, and had caused the aforesaid wise man to ponder. He had, after an hour's consideration which included other things, indited a long letter to the General in charge, in which he had suggested that when Senator McBain arrived he should be treated with all courtesy and kindness, given every opportunity of obtaining information, and—given rope enough.

These were the wise man's actual concluding words; they did not, however, commend themselves to General Fortis, a grandiose, conscientious and rather dull person, who had just read his newspaper and mail. He swore at his orderly, and exchanged vicious confidences with his senior colonel on the strength of it.

"Sending that swine here with letters of introduction, God bless you, after—"

But the General pocketed his indignation and entertained the Senator.



It was the moment of Senator McBain's life

"You see, General," explained the Senator, "I'm not picking any holes in the army, or in any individual in it. It's the system, I guess; it's the general policy—I want to look around and see. I have no doubt you will be glad to be released from this exile."

General Fortis was understood to swallow the wrong way at that moment, and in the consequent explosion of coughing a reply was rendered superfluous.

"I'm not one that suffers fools gladly,"



bitterly complained the General to his senior Colonel; but that astute officer shrugged his shoulders.

"It's wise, sir, perhaps, sometimes to answer a fool according to his folly," he quoted back.

"Give him every opportunity—" The General snorted as he repeated a sentence from his instructions. "Well, he shall have it. He shall go to Ojaga."

"There's the girl," interjected the Colonel hastily.

"That can't be helped," said his superior grimly. "All good little girls should be in bed. Besides there's Graham. Send him special instructions to keep an eye on her. He can let the old man wander where he will."

"It's a question of raids," the Colonel explained later to the Senator. "We're obliged to keep our forces extended over the hilly country for the protection of the peaceable folk. Otherwise the valleys would be pillaged."

McBain adjusted his glasses and surveyed him with a withering smile. As if he, McBain, had not disposed of that absurd pretense long since in several speeches! Farao was fighting for the freedom of his native land, and for the enfranchisement of the very natives whom these military imagined or feigned that he would pillage.

"Of course if we could pen them in we could solve the whole problem at once," pursued the Colonel. "But he is as slippery as an eel. Why, I guess he's for us about what DeWet was for the Britishers in the Boer war."

The comparison struck the Senator as apt and pat. He nodded. "That's so," he said more grimly than ever. "But I never heard of the British protecting the Boers from DeWet."

The Colonel shrugged his shoulders. Yes, he had better be passed on to Graham with a word of warning about the girl. Nothing would ever persuade this obstinate philanthropist except the verdict of his eyeglasses.

"We're sending you a mule," he wrote informally to Basil Graham at Ojaga. "Deal with him as you will. He wants to know. Perhaps you can help him. The chief here is tired, and I'm afraid of an

explosion. Our orders are to entertain him, and so we shift him on to you. You've got the best seats in the circus. Mind the girl. She's worth it, I should gather."

The Colonel, being engaged to a charming girl in Philadelphia, had no particular need of Helen McBain, but it was otherwise with Graham. When the cavalcade came down from the hills to his huts on the plateau, his heart beat like a hammer, and he was aware of a flush in the brown of his face. Fair haired, slender, of a splendid animation, and with a child's zest in things, Helen McBain was a vision to cheer a lonely out-station. Basil Graham was in charge of the Ojaga post, first because he was a favorite of the chiefs, second because it was a danger zone, and lastly because he had won a reputation for "bush" warfare. One hundred men served under him and enjoyed the miasmas of the valley. The post was central for the observation of the northern valleys, and somewhere in the broken land of the south lurked Blue Blazes, waiting an opportunity. Willie Van Hort, shaking like a reed with marsh fever as he stuttered his jests, helped him to entertain the Senator and Miss McBain.

"We'll open the champagne, old man," said Willie to Graham. "This call needs celebration. Have you got lobster *à la Newburgh* on the menu to-night? He'll expect it. We're living in luxury, we are, battenning on the blessed niggers, and enjoying ourselves in ball-room style."

This was after the Senator had exchanged some views with Willie. Later that night, after the champagne had been opened and the miasma was rising on the plateau from the hollows below, Willie entertained the Senator with facts; while Graham talked to Miss McBain.

"The point is," said Willie, knocking it in with his forefinger, "that the Government is wasting money on this island. You see for yourself how it is. Look round on the luxuries in which the army is lapped. Consider the prospects of Ojaga as a health-resort." Here a fit of shivers took him and he reached for

his quinine capsules. "Senator, the people in the United States don't know half what goes on here," he concluded in an awesome whisper.

"Sir, you are quite right," said the Senator, "but it is my mission to open their eyes."

Willie shook his head sadly. "It is an impossible task, an heroic, but an impossible task. They look upon this Blue Blazes as a criminal, when we who know him realize his great qualities. It has gone to my heart, sir, to have to pursue and persecute that noble man—but business is business," said Willie, coughing over his capsule. Basil Graham through his agreeable talk with Helen McBain caught snatches of this conversation, and grew uneasy.

That night in the seclusion of the apartments which Captain Graham had courteously placed at his disposal, Senator McBain proffered to Helen certain opinions.

"I'm glad I came, Helen," he said. "It's opened my eyes wider. From what I gather there's been a heap more going on than I ever suspected. It's worse than we thought," he reflected. "A nice, frank, intelligent fellow, that Van Hort. He don't cotton to the job, and that's the fact. I shall find him useful! Graham seems a bit frosty."

Helen was not of this opinion, and said so. "He is a very nice man, and look at those flowers. I'm sure he's put them here." She buried her nose in the wild blossoms with an exclamation of disappointment. "Well, anyway, they look nice if they haven't fragrance," she declared. "As for Mr. Van Hort, father, it seems to me he was jollying you. This Blue Blazes is a terrible creature, Captain Graham says; he's got no feelings or heart. He's an ogre."

"That," observed McBain calmly, "is precisely the story I should have expected to hear from official quarters. They pour it into the ears of babes and sucklings. You go along, Helen, and enjoy yourself all you can. Leave your old father to get on with the business."

As for the shameless Willie, he was taken to task by his superior.

"Look here, boy, none of that,"

warned Graham. "It's not what we're here for; and besides, the girl saw it, I'll swear. I won't have you teasing her like that."

"H-hang it," stuttered Willie, "you're robbing me of my one sport, a little thing all my own. Here I've been eighteen awful months, and never been at a play all that time. Now you rob me of my ewe lamb," he wailed.

It is, however, hard to convince an obstinate man, and even if Willie had "turned turtle" on his previous statements, McBain would have adhered to his opinions. As it was, he avidly employed Willie's "facts" as a base of operations.

"As you said, Lieutenant Van Hort," he said later, "it's nonsense, at the least, keeping you here to chain up an innocent native only bent on the good of his country. That is a view I strongly hold."

"Yes," said Willie meekly.

Meanwhile the Senator pursued his personal investigations. He moved about among the villages in the neighborhood, putting questions; but as these questions as well as the answers of the natives, had to be interpreted, he did not find it very satisfactory. He suspected the interpreter, all the more that most of the answers favored the character of Blue Blazes as a desperado. There were, he reflected, two explanations of this—the one that the interpreter was "faking" the answers, the other that the natives were terrorized by the presence of the military and bore false witness. You will observe that the Senator did not allow for the possibility of the answers embodying the true views of the natives.

"There's one thing, sir, strikes me about your people here," said he to Willie Van Hort, "and that is the lies they tell."

Willie under great temptation relapsed. "Ah," he said shaking his head sadly, "think of the lives they lead, of the strain upon them."

"Precisely, sir," said Senator McBain, snapping his jaw on it, as Willie threw up his hands in a wordless gesture. "What you say is very sensible and to the point."

It must, of course, be said in Willie's

favor that he had no idea of the use to which these "facts" and exposures of his would be put. He was, in the Colonel's phrase, answering a fool according to his folly. Still less had he any prevision as to the course of action which his remarks might generate in the Senator. What happened was undoubtedly a surprise, and a surprise that left Willie agape and conscience-stricken.

It happened in this way. There was trouble at a village in the Fongan valley and Graham, with an escort to uphold the dignity of the United States, had gone down much against his will to settle a tribal quarrel, leaving Willie Van Hort in charge of the post. On the second day arrived a rumor that Farao was out and active. It came in the form of a native, ragged and man-handled, from the district of the chief Saranyong, concerning whose loyalty suspicions had long been entertained. Leaving an interesting discussion with Senator McBain on the prospects of a possible Second Methodist Episcopal mission in the island, Willie hobbled off with a party of men, enraptured at the chance of action.

"A mere formality, of course," he explained to McBain. "Consider how we are compelled to strut in feathers before these folk and pity us for circus-riders."

Senator McBain spent the next few hours very dully in the absence of the agreeable Lieutenant, as dully as did his daughter in the absence of Basil Graham. He re-read his notes on the "Situation in Tanong," questioned the sergeant in charge, and finally was inspired by an idea. "Charlie" was the name of a native boy employed in the Captain's compound, and Charlie had already shown himself friendly to the new comers, run errands, and sat in admiration, so to speak, at Helen McBain's feet.

"Charlie," said the Senator, "it is reported that the chief Farao is moving again. Where would that be?"

Charlie grinned and spread his arms widely southward to the rugged hills.

"No can tell," he replied. "Somewhere—out there—beyond Sarlong."

"Charlie," said the Senator wheed-

lingly, "Missy and me—you take us Sarlong."

Charlie hesitated; his eyes glistened at the gold coin flourished in the Senator's hands, and he finally surrendered.

"Can take Sarlong—no more. Charlie no belong more."

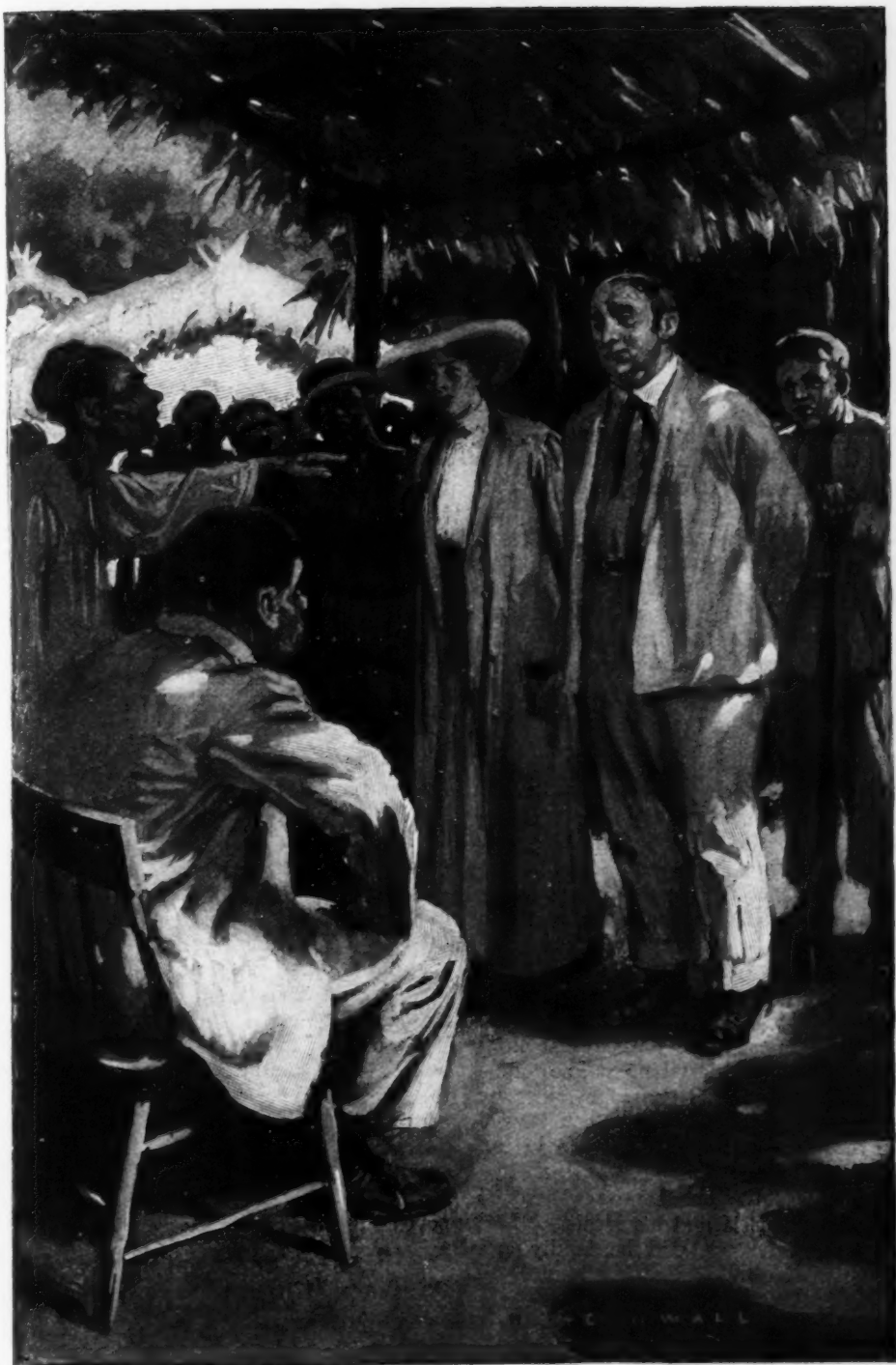
It was, however, at a village one mile from Ojaga that one Haslem was encountered and annexed, who had theories as to the country outside Sarlong: and thus a little party of four on mules, quite unarmed, moved along the bush tracks and up the ravines on the borders of the bad lands. To Helen McBain it was an opportunity for further sight-seeing. She had been pent up in the immediate environment of the post for a week or more, and she rejoiced in her enlargement—during the absence of Captain Basil Graham. To Haslem and Charlie it was a mere question of money, combined in the latter's case with an anxiety to oblige Missy. To Angus McBain it was the chance of a political lifetime. He had conceived the colossal idea of interviewing Blue Blazes.

Twenty hours after the departure a native staggered into Ojaga camp, gulping out a horrid tale. Blue Blazes had fallen in with the party, had killed one, wounded another, and held the two whites in the hollow of his awful and bloodthirsty hand. Graham, who had arrived from the valley, listened with a bleak, blanched face, and late that night Willie Van Hort, who had come in with his captive, blubbered on the shoulder of the older man, as he cursed himself and whimpered.

"I never dreamt—God's my witness I never thought—he would do such a thing. Oh, my God—Graham! And the girl! She told me she'd meet me in Washington, laughing, when—"

Graham made no response: he merely issued his orders. They marched at moon-rise.

When the Senator's outfit had been seized quite unexpectedly on the confines of Sarlong, no harm had been done beyond a slice in Haslem's leg. The party made no resistance, and was hurried without any regard to its feelings or its physical comfort to Blue Blazes him-



"Chief ask what you come for?"



self. Senator McBain was aware of a man of large proportions, with a fat yellow face and a sinister gleam in the eyes. He put inquiries to his men, and stared at the two white prisoners. The Senator thought it the plain opportunity for a little address at this juncture, and he spoke to the point. He had come as a friend, not as an agent of war; it was his design to explain and interpret Farao's sentiments and schemes to the United States Government. While he spoke, he observed to his chagrin that the chief's eyes had wandered from him to his daughter, on whom they rested greedily. Without waiting for the Senator to finish, Blue Blazes suddenly gave an order, whereupon the report of rifles rang out, and Charlie fell forward on his face in silent death, while Haslem was seen by the stricken Senator to be wriggling in torture on the earth. No attention was paid to either the dead or the wounded; but Helen, white-faced and clinging to her shaken father, was snatched away by rude and ruthless hands, and McBain himself was roughly taken in charge and marched from the scene. All that night he spent in a guarded hut, in anxious speculation as to what was to happen, particularly to Helen, and divided in his mind as to old and obdurate convictions and opinions. When morning came he was hauled into the presence of the chief, whose lowering countenance and blood-shot eyes searched him savagely. Near by was a smiling little man, yellow of face and Mongolian of feature, who had evidently been imported for his services as interpreter. He had lived in the treaty ports and at Singapore and had picked up a knowledge of English which was peculiar and racy.

"Chief ask what you dam come for?" he said to the Senator, who cheered up at the sound of his broken English. Here at last was the chance to explain, to vindicate himself and his ideals.

"I have come," said he boldly and with dignity, "to see Farao himself in order to help contribute to the settlement of this unhappy war."

The interpreter addressed Blue Blazes, and having received his instructions turned to McBain.

"Chief say he go through your dam pockets—see what you got," he announced.

This was a sad surprise to McBain, who had thought to see the native respond loyally to the mission of Peace and Good-will. He smiled in deprecation.

"I am afraid I have nothing of value upon me," he said, feeling his distrust in interpreters revive once more. "But I have something more valuable to offer, and that is my services in regularizing the position of the chief, in making it right with the people of the United States, who, I am convinced, would, once acquainted with the true nature of this war, never consent to allow—"

"Chief," interrupted the interpreter, to whom Blue Blazes growled, "Chief say he dam well hang you on tree."

This was certainly discouraging, not to say disconcerting. Into McBain's mind began to creep doubt, and a little shadow of fear fell on his heart. He looked about the circle of hostile and merciless faces, and something which he had never before experienced surged in him. He had seen Charlie shot down ruthlessly, and Haslem writhing in the agonies of death. The horrid sight came back to him, flashing instantaneously and involuntarily upon him. He did not want to look at it, but it came. He was a man of theories, a man of peace, a man of mind; the conduct of the world by mere physical violence had always been inconceivable to him. He had never seen anything of it. His life throughout his sixty years had been sheltered from the crude realities. People had died and people had lived, but not in such terrible, primitive ways. He was civilization, in a word, face to face with barbarism, and he was afraid. Chill fear gripped him. He spoke with earnestness and vehemence.

"Tell the chief that he is mistaken. I am here on a mission of peace. I am prepared to use all my influence to secure peace and the withdrawal of the soldiers. I have pleaded his cause in the United States Senate. I am prepared—"

Once more Blue Blazes interjected words to the interpreter.

"Chief say what you pay he let you go?" inquired the yellow-faced man.



"Pay!" The Senator stared and stammered, his old faiths ebbing fast, his carefully constructed world crumbling under him. "I am prepared to pay a ransom," he said in distress. "But I am a Senator of the United States, influential with the Government."

The little interpreter, looking at him through oblique eyes, spoke to the chief, and McBain hung on the results of their conversation. Blue Blazes was manifestly affected at last; his face had undergone a great change. Ah, Senator McBain had after all not then been wrong? There was no doubt that Blue Blazes had earned his dominant position by a civilization of gifts. A sense of the situation penetrated to him even through the dull medium of the interpreter. Here was an emissary from the United States offering terms. His eyes gleamed, and he delivered a long speech to the yellow man.

"Excellency hear you," said the latter to McBain, rapidly promoting his master. "He satisfied you. You go talk Government. But Excellency want dam money—crops ruined, must build dam houses." He emphasized with a wave of his hands to the valleys, as well as by the impressive adjective he had picked up in the haunts of the white man. "Chief say how much you give."

It sounded much nicer put in that way. The Senator was relieved. No doubt the chief would require money to assist the moral and economical regeneration of his people. The thought did him credit.

"I will give \$5,000," said McBain, adjusting his glasses, "as my personal contribution to the Restitution Fund."

The news was communicated to Blue Blazes, who grunted. The interpreter turned.

"Excellency says dam good," he remarked.

"Then I take it that my daughter and I will be free at once to return to Ojaga," remarked the Senator a little anxiously.

The question was conveyed to the chief, who replied through his mouthpiece.

"Chief says you go free at dark. No can before for fighting."

McBain understood that military pre-

cautions dictated this necessity. "And my daughter," he persisted.

"Girl go too. She join you. Chief send soldiers." McBain breathed his relief in a big sigh. So! He had effected his purpose, though he had some doubts as to whether he wholly approved the character and methods of Farao. Anyway he had got what he wanted, freedom; and he had achieved what he had come out for, an interview, not quite satisfactory from all points of view, but still interesting and instructive. He made inquiries of the interpreter as to the whereabouts of Helen, and learned from that amiable dunderhead that she was in the other camp, quite safe. He was a little uneasy at this, but reflected that all would be readjusted in a few hours. The yellow man explained that he would be escorted to a certain point from which he could easily make his way to Ojaga. So he waited with what patience he might until the fall of dusk.

Shortly after that he was visited by the interpreter and three natives all armed, and was given to understand that the hour had arrived for his enlargement. The yellow man was equipped with a piece of paper which he set before the prisoner.

"Chief say you write dam well, ask send \$5,000; say build houses, make crops."

"Certainly," said McBain, "though he need not have doubted my good-faith." He took out his pencil and wrote to his agent at Shanghai, and having addressed it, handed it to the other, who scrutinized it gravely, nodded, and put it in his pocket. A few minutes later they set out. The course lay through a scrub down the slope of the hill on which the camp was placed. McBain anxiously inquired for his daughter, and was informed that she was ahead with another party.

"We join, we catch 'um," explained the interpreter.

For half an hour they descended in a jungle, and at last reached the bank of a river where the ford led to an open track northward.

"Him way there," grinned the yellow man, who seemed of a sudden to have taken on an evil aspect.

"Where is my daughter?" demanded the Senator with growing suspicions.

"Girl she all right." The yellow man grinned wider and his eyes gleamed. He gave an order in the native tongue, and the natives came to a halt. One came forward and seized McBain's arms, jerking them backwards, while another began to tie them with a rope.

"What's this? Why do you do this? Let me alone," cried the amazed and horrified Senator.

The yellow man never ceased to grin, but no one paid any heed. He was bound and fastened to a sapling, and the natives retreated ten paces. They had raised their guns. In a flash, what it all meant broke with thunder upon the unhappy man. They had got what they wanted of him, and had no further use for him. But where was Helen? Amid all the horrors of the moment that thought was the most horrible. The rifles were leveled—His voice rang out in a wild cry, as it were a cry to Heaven for vengeance.

Across the ford where the track ran, the thin moonlight flickered on a figure, then upon another—upon others. A horse was beating the water noisily as it struggled across under the spur of a wild rider. There were shouts—the reports of rifles cracked in the air.

The yellow man twisted about, and took in the situation with his sharp eyes.

The three natives bolted without waiting for orders, and were lost in the jungle as Captain Basil Graham's horse

came floundering ashore; thirty seconds later Willie Van Hort ran down a squealing native as he made along the bank; and thus the yellow man changed masters once more.

McBain was babbling out his story. "Helen! Captain Graham—I don't know what's become of her—what they've done—"

Graham snapped his orders on the evening air.

"Bring him along," he shouted to Willie. "He may have an idea as to Blue Blazes' whereabouts. Anyway, we've got the scab there."

The scab, alias the interpreter, having recovered himself, was harmonizing himself

to the new conditions. He volunteered to point the way to the camp, and Graham, pushing on with alacrity, found himself within striking distance in a couple of hours.

"I wish we'd settled the hash of those fellows," muttered Willie Van Hort savagely. "They are certain to have got back and given the alarm."

But Graham had made a shrewd interrogation of the yellow man, and had learned of the divided camp. He was not so sure. This was the second camp in which Helen McBain was held that was before them. His object was to rescue her and deal with Blue Blazes at the



She fell against him crying

other place later. Earthworks surrounded the camp, but there was no alarm.

"They haven't heard yet," said Graham, "so far, good."

Stealthily the troops crept round the circle, and at a signal the advance was made. Graham stormed the earthworks at the head of his men, Willie shouting from the other side. There was a heavy fusillade for some time, and the enemy were routed from hut after hut where they had lain in careless sleep. The scab, following his new masters, plucked Graham by the arm.

"Well?" the officer snapped.

"Big hut dam chief's. Girl pidgin belong."

Graham swerved and looked; at the same time a volley rattled against the hut in question and the door broke open. Graham was the first to recognize in the darkness that flying figure. He arrested his men, and ran forward to her.

"Miss McBain!" he shouted, and she fell against him, crying hysterically and clasping him. She was still crying when McBain reached her, and took her to his bosom.

"Father, father—" she wept and murmured in his ears.

Willie Van Hort, meeting his captain breathlessly, called out, "Blue Blazes is here. He was in this hut. He's off that way!"

White-faced, wild and shaking, the

Senator confronted Graham, with his clinging burden clutching him tightly.

"Kill him!" he cried hoarsely. "Do you hear, kill him!" cried the light of the Omega Second Methodist Episcopal, with a gulping sob.

It would have been a satisfaction to Basil Graham if he could have reflected that his hand had struck the wretch down. But as a matter of history Blue Blazes fell to the bag of some persons unknown. He was found shot dead with two bullets in him just outside the earthworks. Basil Graham hoped that one of these was his, but Mrs. Graham did not.

"I am glad he is dead," she told her husband long afterwards when they discussed the awful memory, "but I don't think I want you to have shot him."

On receiving General Fortis' reports the wise man at Washington read them through carefully and tossed them over to his secretary.

"All's well that ends well," he observed rather gravely. "It's all right, Jenkins. We sha'n't hear any more of Tanong, I think." He paused reflectively. "I don't know. Well, yes, perhaps we shall for the last time. Arrange for these facts to go into the press to-morrow. I think it looks a promising story, eh?"

So Tanong rose once again—and for the last time—to the dignity of scareheads.

## Anabasco Betz and Her Back

BY ELLIS PARKER BUTLER

Author of "Pigs Is Pigs," "Boss Grogan's Pull," etc.

LAST summer, when Aunt Rhinoculura Betz received her automatic piano, she was about the most disappointed lady in our village. For years and years she had loved music passionately, but as she had never learned to play, and didn't know one note from another, she had never bought a piano; but when the automatic kind came to her notice she sent for one immediately.

As soon as it was in the house she opened up the top slot and let down the pumping pedals, and stuck a roll of the perforated music in the right place and started to play. Probably no person ever attacked a foot-power piano as eagerly as Aunt Rhinoculura jumped at that one, and she reckoned to rip off a half a mile or so of sonatas and *etudes* in no time at all, but the very minute she put

the end of her cork left leg on the pedal she saw it would not work. The cork leg simply lay dormant, as you might say, and soldiered on the job and Aunt Rhinocolura had to do all the work with her right leg, and in a very short time she felt that the right leg was sort of giving out, and that if she was not careful it might break loose at the upper joint and be utterly ruined.

So Aunt Rhinocolura wrote to her niece at Edgeville, Anabasco Betz, whom she remembered as having good strong feet, and told her to come over and attain a musical education. So, as Aunt Rhinocolura is the money of the family, Anabasco packed the rest of her clothes in a suit case and came right over on the 8:04 train.

When Anabasco got her strong, sturdy, healthy feet on the pedals, the piano jumped right in and musicked for all it was worth. Anabasco was a wonder at it. She was able to turn the piano loose at top speed and at full loudness and throw on the sustaining levers and whoop it up. She could make a gentle little Chopin nocturne sound three times as loud as a full orchestra ripping the lining out of a Wagner noise-spurt. When Anabasco wiggled her feet on those pedals the bric-a-brac jolted off the mantels and large pieces of plaster ceiling dropped all around like snow. She bent over and grabbed the piano underneath the key-board with both hands, and wiggled from side to side, and the perspiration ran down her face and formed a pool in her lap, and Aunt Rhinocolura lay back in her easy chair and shouted, "Play some more!" Anabasco played from 9:16 a. m. till 10:11 p. m. and then she took off her shoes and played in her stocking feet until 12:44, when she fell off the piano bench in utter exhaustion. Both her legs were numb up to the waist and she had blisters at the base of nine of her toes. So Aunt Rhinocolura asked her to play just one more tune, and Anabasco lay on the floor on her stomach and pumped out one more tune with her hands.

About three o'clock that morning Aunt Rhinocolura heard dull groans coming from Anabasco's room, and she

got up hurriedly and went in to see what was the matter, going hoppety-hop on her good leg, and when she saw how Anabasco was suffering with an aching back she hoppety-hopped back and put on her cork leg and went to the medicine closet, and took down the bottle of liniment. She rubbed Anabasco's back for three-quarters of an hour and Anabasco did not feel any better, and it was no wonder, for Aunt Rhinocolura had grabbed up the furniture polish bottle in the dark by mistake and what Anabasco needed was relief from pain, and not a "high and permanent polish," as guaranteed by the label on the polish bottle.

So when she saw that Anabasco was no better, Aunt Rhinocolura said she wished she had a good old-style porous plaster, which is the best thing for a sore back, after all, and she had no sooner said it than she thought of the perforated music rolls of the automatic piano. "Like cures like," as the doctors say, and as a music roll was what had caused Anabasco's pain, why shouldn't a music roll cure it? And a piece of music roll would look like a porous plaster anyway.

Aunt Rhinocolura went down to the parlor and yanked up the first roll she laid her hand on and ripped off a foot or two, and hurried back and stuck it on Anabasco's back. It stuck close and well, on account of the eight coats of furniture polish that had been applied to Anabasco's back. Then Aunt Rhinocolura sat down to see whether Anabasco would be relieved.

In about four minutes Anabasco curled up into a tight knot and then opened out again suddenly, like a cheese mite, and began curling and writhing and throwing fits, and having zig-zag spasms and eccentric convulsions. She seemed to be having a combination of something like a cat-fit and St. Vitus dance, complicated with violent insanity and general whoops. Aunt Rhinocolura was quite startled and sent for Doc. Weaver in a hurry.

When Doc. Weaver arrived he seemed as puzzled as Aunt Rhinocolura had been, and remarked that this was going to be a difficult case to diagnose, because Ana-



basco wouldn't hold still long enough to be tested by any of the known rules; but after awhile they lassooed her with the clothes line and Doc. Weaver had a chance to go ahead and diagnose. He looked at her tongue and felt her pulse, and the more he diagnosed the more excited and puzzled he became. He said he could hardly believe it, and that if he hadn't seen it with his own eyes he wouldn't believe it. When Aunt Rhinocolura begged him to tell her the worst, he looked mighty solemn and said that Anabasco had a mighty bad case of Moskowski *Allegretto Ciojoso* on the chest, and yet he could hardly think it possible, for that wasn't rightly a dis-

ease, but a piece of music, and he had never heard of any one having it this way. But, still, he said, everything pointed to its being a fact that Anabasco had it, and if she wasn't relieved mighty soon she would, as the fellow says, be a gone goose.

As soon as Aunt Rhinocolura heard this she gave a joyful cry and began peeling the strip of music roll off Anabasco's back, and as soon as it was off Anabasco fell sweetly into a deep sleep of exhaustion, with no sign of pain whatever, except that her large, virile feet kept waving to and fro like the ears of an elephant. Aunt Rhiny sold the piano to Doc.

## The Whittler

BY RALPH W. GILMAN

ILLUSTRATED BY MONTE CREWS

JOE WARE leaned against his truck, and with a jerk of his thumb, indicated a waste piece of ground between the siding and the town.

"He was right over there the first time I saw him, a rickety-built, ragged fellow with a black beard and a flat, square bundle wrapped in coffee-sacking slung over his back by a piece of string. He was standing with his head down, scratching away at a trash pile, using his stick in a way that made you think of a robin pulling fish-worms after a shower.

"'Blamed funny sort of bird,' I thinks; and while I was trying to size him up to see what species he belongs to, he bends over with a jack-knife movement, picks something from the ground, turns it over in his hand a couple of times, rubs it across his sleeve, and puts it away carefully inside his coat. Then, still picking and pecking, he went on down the dumping ground and behind some cars by the stock yards.

"The next time I thought of him I was coming back from dinner at the Lone Star, and passed the trash piles.

"The Moss, the operator and ticket

man, was standing in the middle of the track throwing chunks of ballast at some sparrows that were trying to build in the semaphore.

"'Seen anything of a scarecrow kind of man about here?' I asked.

"'No,' he says at first, grouchy because he couldn't hit the birds. 'But,' he goes on, 'if he was a particular friend of yours, I think I did see some such a gentlemen on the platform a bit ago.'

"So I takes a squint along the platform at the people—women standing in little pink-and-white knots by their suit-cases, punching holes in the gravel with their parasols; two or three children, stiff and starchy, wanting to play in the dirt, and miserable because they couldn't; some traveling men walking up and down, smoking cigars. Then I sees my man, dirty as ever, the bundle still over his back, a grin on his whiskers, working his way through the crowd and tackling the men about something. Most of them gives him a shake of the head and a sour look, but some smiles a little and looks back at him over their shoulders. When he gets to the end of the platform he swings him-



self up on a truck by the baggage-room door and sits there with about two inches of bare ankle full of blue veins showing between the bottoms of his pants and the tops of his shoes.

"'Nice day,' I says, coming up, and leaning against one of the shed posts, about four feet away.

"'Yep,' he grunts, sort of surly in his beard, and a Mexican twang to his speech, and goes on swinging his legs just as if I wasn't on the map.

"I took a good look at him and saw that his nose was soft and pudgy, like the end of a ripe cucumber, and that his eyes had spider-web patterns of red running through the white.

"'Did they turn you down?' I asks.

"'Turn me down!' he growls, with his beard sticking out like the bristles on a scrubbing brush. 'Turn me down! You ought to wear glasses. Of course they turned me down—and just because I needed a dime! There aint a true American in the bunch—they're a lot of white-collared bums!'

"I pitched him a coin.

"'You're a gentleman,' he says, spinning the money on the truck.

"'And what might you be?' I asks.

"'Might be?' he says, stroking his beard. 'Might be! Lord, but that's an intelligent question.' He laughs a sort of cast-iron cackle that didn't have any mirth in it and then jerking his thumb over his shoulder he went on:

"'Do you see that sack?'

"I nods at him.

"'And these bottles?'—pulling back his coat—'and this?' He took out a horn-handled knife.

"'Yes.'

"'There's a couple of pieces of select white pine in that bundle, the kind we used to build fences of twenty years ago, but so scarce now it scares you to find a piece.'

"'Yes,' I says again.

"'Well, sir,' he says. 'My trick is to take the knife, apply it to the pine, and put the product in a bottle. In other words, I'm a whittler.' And before I could say yes or no, he sticks his thumbs in his upper vest pockets and with his fingers waving back and forth like a but-

terfly fanning itself on a Scotch thistle, says in a voice that rasped like two pieces of sandpaper—all in one tone: 'I whittle crosses, crucifixes, crawfishes, crocodiles, schooners, yawls, and complex and intricate puzzles of all kinds. I not only whittle 'em, but I put 'em into bottles to be set on the mantels, shelves and sideboards of the best houses for the admiration and wonder of all the sizes and sexes of humanity. Besides, I carve vignette wreaths, and do fancy finishing on interior wood.' Then he quit abruptly, took his fingers from his vest, and shrunk back like a turtle going into its shell.

"'Where did you whittle last?' I asked, handing him a cigar.

"He turned the gift over in his fingers.

"'City of Mexico,' he says, with a grunt.

"'Business good there?'

"'Six cathedrals, the president's palace, and a batch of *Cholo* crucifixes,' he says.

"'There long?'

"'Three months, this time,' he says, rubbing his nose.

"'Like the country?'

"'The best country on earth,' he says, still rubbing his nose. 'Everything half what it is here and every American down there good for a dime or a dollar, when they don't order some whittling.'

"'And yet, here you are, walking away from milk and honey. How's that?'

"'Too much of it,' he replies. 'I couldn't stand the prosperity. Besides, there were some other things. I was drunk six weeks at a stretch. When I started in my clothes were sound, I was clean shaved and a gentleman; when I woke up, I was—this.'

"'But you've got some folks somewhere, haven't you—somebody who would help you on your feet again, and help you to stay there?'

"He looks at me a bit out of one eye like a strange dog when you whistle at it, and it don't know whether you've got a bone or a tin can. Then he says, short and sharp—'Chop it, or you'll be preaching next. I thought you were on the square.'

"I digs up another coin then to mollify him.

"He takes it without a word, blinking at me out of his reddish eyes, swings down slow and heavy off the truck, like he weighed six hundred and was made of glass, and goes across the vacant ground toward the Irrigator saloon.

"That same day I had another jolt. It was after the three o'clock train had picked up her passengers and gone chugging down the line. I was starting across the platform when I heard somebody behind me say, 'Oh, Mr. Baggage-man.' I don't usually reply when I'm called that. I am Joe Ware, or just Joe, to every man, woman, child, cow-puncher, and train-man in this corner of Texas, and I aint going to be anything else. But I knew from the voice that it was a woman, and that she was anxious over something, so I stopped. You always do. 'Some fool petticoat,' I thinks, 'that either left her handkerchief on the cars and wants me to heat up twenty-five miles of Western Union and stop four or five thousand tons of 'Limited' to get it back, or else she's got a cat in a crate and wants it fed.' So I turned around, all sore inside about it, and runs my eye over her.

"I sees at once that she belongs to the different sort, and the thermometer goes up a few degrees, and I begins to feel ashamed. She was a little, gray, undersized thing that made you feel awful big the way she had to twist her neck to look up at you, and she had an east-and-west patch of freckles running across her face just below her eyes that made you think of confetti scattered on a cement walk. She looked, too, like she was ready to jump if you talked loud to her and I knew without being told, that she was religious and the kind of a woman that needs somebody to stand between her and the wind and aint no good until they find that somebody.

"'What is it?' I asks.

"'Oh!' she sighs, sucking in a long breath and brushing at a lemon-colored fluff of hair that was blowing into her eyes, 'I don't want to trouble you, but—' and stops to do some more deep breathing.

"'That's what I'm here for—trouble,' I says, 'and not for decoration. I fattens on trouble. What is it?'

"'When will the five-thirty train be here?' she asks, squirming like she didn't hardly think it proper to be talking to me, and me in my shirt sleeves.

"'At five-thirty, if it's on time, and the clock don't stop.'

"'Oh!' she says, 'that's why they call it the five-thirty, isn't it?'

"'Exactly,' I says.

"'But if it wouldn't be too much trouble, Mr. Baggage-man—'

"'Joe Ware,' I corrects.

"'—Mr. Ware,' she continues, brushing at her hair, and blushing. 'Would you please tell me when it comes? I'm so afraid I'll miss it.'

"'Sure thing,' I says. 'I'm your huckle-berry.'

"'What!' she gasps, looking at the ground.

"I gazes at her standing there sort of helpless and scared and not bad looking, and I thinks of something. 'But pshaw,' I says, 'you are too big and ugly, Joe Ware. You are as clumsy as one of those C Y range steers that they load at the stock-yards every Thursday.' And I felt like I ought to stoop a little to keep from bumping the beams of the train-shed.

"'When she looks up again, she was still pink below the freckle patch, and ready to duck if things looked rough. I saw then that she had a little bow of white ribbon on her left shoulder, and that there wasn't no rings on her fingers.

"'Beg your pardon, ma'am, for my rough talk,' I says, 'but out here, having mostly men to talk to, we gets the polish worn off. I didn't mean nothing personal.'

"'Oh!' she gasps again, and drops her eyes to see if the toe of her shoe was polished.

"'We were through talking then. She knew it and I knew it. But she didn't go on, and I wasn't going to show any more bad manners. So I opens up a new line of talk.

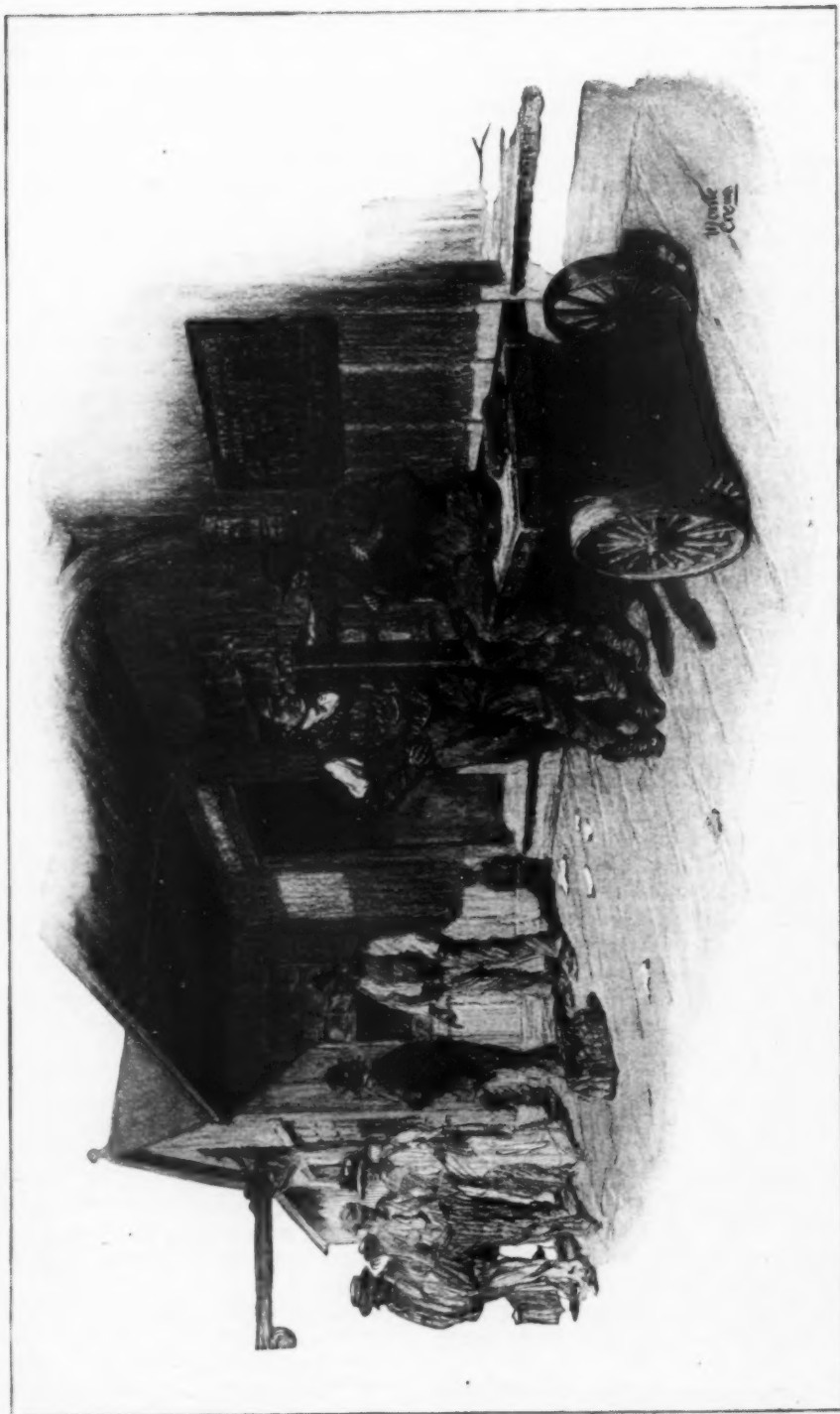
"'Come far?' I asked.

"'Near Peoria,' she confesses.

"'I was raised at Quincy,' I chances.

"'That's not far off,' she says.

"'But if it's any of my business, are you going far?' I asks.



"My trick is to take the knife, apply it to the pine, and put the product in a bottle."

"'City of—of Mexico,' she answers, getting scared again.

"'Whew!' I blew off. The idea of her going off to a foreign city when she didn't know enough to change cars in her own country, upset me.

"'What's the matter?' she asks, throwing her hands up to her chest.

"'Asthma,' I says. 'Came out here on account of it.'

"Then she explains about her trip. 'You see, there wasn't anybody else to go,' she says, 'and uncle way down there by himself, and me away up here by myself, and Auntie's money coming in for him, and him not knowing it, I just had to go. Do you think I will find him?'

"'How do I know? I don't know anything about the circumstances. Suppose you enlighten me.'

"So she sits down on a little steamer trunk that I takes to be hers on account of having some green roses painted on it, being careful to keep her skirt pulled over her feet, and tells her story, starting in woman fashion in the middle, and working out both ways by jerks, me filling out the gaps by questions.

"It was about like this: She had an uncle who had gone off to Mexico about six years back with some money that didn't belong to him. He had been there ever since without notifying the family exactly where he was located. Meantime her father and mother had died off, and she had gone to live with an aunt, the last relative she had, except this uncle. Then the aunt died. But before she croaked, being the only sister of the uncle, and a church woman, and never getting over the disgrace of her brother's crime, she had made her will leaving all her property to him. There was enough of it to pay back what the uncle had taken, and the man he had taken it from had agreed not to prosecute, if he got his money again. So the way it stood, the uncle could go back and begin life where he left off. The girl having heard from some tourists that they had seen the uncle, and she having no other kin, she was on her way to find him.

"'And do you think he is living on the square now?' I asks, thinking of the kind of men who go to foreign parts

with other people's money, and don't come back, nor write.

"'They didn't say, but I think it was on a side street.'

"'Living straight—like a man, I mean,' I says.

"'He belonged to our church when he left,' she says, as if that settled it. 'And none of our folks never did do anything wrong.'

"'But what if he wasn't—if he had slipped down the grade some since?' I says. 'What would you do?'

"'Oh, I don't know. I wouldn't have nobody then in all the world.' And her lips began to twitch, and her face to get long.

"'Another thing,' I says, swallowing my Adam's apple, for I hate to see a female splashing her tears around, 'if it was a mistake about those people seeing him, and he was dead, who would get the money?'

"'Me,' she says.

"'And how much would it be?'

"'Two thousand,' she says, like it frightened her to speak of so much money in a lump. I could see then that it was two thousand saved up a nickel and a quarter at a time, maybe by sewing, or raising chickens, or making butter. That was what made it seem so big. I had two thousand myself in the Merchant's Bank, and didn't think it a damp spot in the bucket.

"'And your name is—'

"'Amelia Barret,' she says, meek.

"'And you live at Peoria?'

"'Yes,' she answers and gives me the number.

"'Well, I've got a little business over at the stage office, Miss Barret, and must gallop on,' I tells her. 'But I'll be back before train time, and see you get started right.' I cuts across lots with my head down, thinking, and my heart flopping about like a fish out of water.

"When I got back, she was still sitting on the little trunk in the middle of the platform, looking as lonesome as a grain of wheat in a box car.

"'Is it pretty near five-thirty?' she asked, pushing her hair out of her eyes.

"'A whizz around of the long arm yet,' I says careless.



"'A what?' she gasps.

"'An hour,' I says, feeling like I had stepped on her dress. 'But,' I goes on, 'I have been thinking of something. You see I am here all the time, and I see most everybody going and coming out of Mexico, as they change cars. Now, if I knew what your uncle looked like, had a picture of him, and description, I might see him some time, or hear about him, and I could send you word.'

"'I hadn't thought of that,' she says, and opens up a wilted, black handbag, and digs around among handkerchiefs, hatpins, combs and about three dollars in silver—and fishes up a photograph.

"'That's him,' she says, 'taken ten years ago. Of course, he's older now and changed some.'

"'I puts my eyes on the likeness of a peaked face fellow with a mug for drink, hair pasted down over his ears and a thin neck choked by a high collar—the picture of a fellow that, if he lived in the country, would own a yellow dog and fish all day in the creek just to be fishing and then tell lies about it in the evening on top of a grocery box; or, if he lived in town, would maybe be a cheap clerk, with high tastes, and likely get his fingers into the boss' money box—not much good wherever he was.'

"'He looks so much like mother about the eyes,' she says, getting ready to snuffle as I hands the picture back.

"'Any marks of identification?' I asks.

"'Yes,' she tells me, 'tattoo of an angel clinging to a cross on his right forearm.'

"'It was getting time for me to load up the baggage for the five-thirty, so I sticks out my hand. 'If I don't see you no more, good-by,' I says, and she gives me her hand.

"'What's tumbled on you?' the operator asks the next morning when the slack time was on and I had wandered out in the track where he was stoning the sparrows again. 'You look as flat as a tortilla, and as empty as a box car going east. That new friend of yours bring bad news?'

"'What you talking about?' I says, with my Adam's apple jumping up toward my mouth. The truth was, I was

about as much stuck on the style of that little, gray, uncle-hunting woman as a man can be, and sleep of nights. But I hated to think that I was publishing a daily in my face.

"'Talking about that old soak you was chinning on the truck yesterday,' he says, whaling away with another stone at the birds.

"'The whittler?' I says, my Adam's apple settling back to its place.

"'He was looking for you a bit ago,' the operator goes on to say. 'Come by here drunker'n the hubs of a wagon. I guess he wanted another two bits. Say, but you are easy, Joe Ware; you've got a regular sign hung out in your face: "Everybody taken in here."'

"'Maybe so,' I says.

"'Then I turns around and sees the Whittler coming down the track from the stock-yards, having a hard time to keep between the rails.

"'Morning,' he says, pulling off his hat and twirling it over and over in his hands drum-major style, and flipping it back on top his head.

"'Morning,' I answers, sitting down on a truck. 'World's a little whiter than lampblack to-day.'

"'Happier than I have been since I took to whittling,' he says. 'Strange, isn't it, but it isn't always money that gets us out of our troubles, though it always gets us in. Now when I went down this pike the first time I was sitting on the cushions, a whole seat to myself, diamond ring on my finger, and fifteen hundred in my pocket. Now I comes back from a few days sojourn at the same place, dirty and broke. That's the difference.' He twirled his hat again, bowing and scraping the ground with a back motion of his foot like a dog.

"'Maybe this will cheer you up a little,' I says, pitching him a quarter. 'And now if it aint breaking into your affairs too deep, being full of curiosity, I'd like to know how you come to tumble from a diamond ring and fifteen hundred to where you stand.'

"'Story in three chapters,' he says. 'The first one is booze; the second one is booze; the third one is booze.'

"'Then he pulls up one of his sleeves



to scratch himself, and I see something that might have been a naked woman with chicken wings on her shoulders hanging by her hands to the cross-arm of a telegraph pole. I think then of the woman's uncle.

"Ever in Peoria?"

I puts at him, sort of sharp so as to take him by surprise.

"He stopped his foolishness then and sobered up like I had thrown a bucket of ice water on him.

"Once," he says. "You from there?"

"No, but I knew a woman once who was from there. If I don't forget, her name was Barret," I says, as careless as I could.

"Don't know anybody there," he says, getting gruff all at once and freezing over. "That's all a closed book back there. I put the covers together to stay shut. They think I am dead—and I am, deader than if I had four foot of clay and a cheap stone over me. And I'm going to be dead drunk pretty soon," he adds, and then goes stumbling off through the weed patch toward the town.

"I had a big guess coming about then that maybe he was that uncle the girl was hunting for down in Mexico.

"Hold on," I shouts.

"What do you want?" he growls back.

"Going to be here long?"

"Depends."

"Well, can you cut me out a Fargo truck, and put it in a bottle?"

"Two of them, if you say so," he answers.



"When will the five-thirty train be here?" she asks

"One's enough. Will you do it?"

"Yep." He lifts a foot to steady himself and looks over at the town.

"How long will it take?"

"A week, if I am drinking; three days, if I am sober." And then he goes on after his liquor.

"Well," I thinks, looking after him, "Joe Ware, here's your chance. That fellow's going to be the ladder by which you are going to reach up and pick the tip-topmost flower in the whole feminine patch. He's either that girl's lost uncle, or the mate to him; and I don't think he's that, for the Lord hasn't been making people in duplicates, like trunk checks. Just now, though, he's tipped about forty-five degrees to the bad and

will need some propping and stiffening on the under side of his morals and a coat of white-wash on the outside.' And I fell to wondering what he would resemble, washed and shaved and clothed, with the little woman hanging about his neck, spilling tears down his vest front, and maybe kissing him. 'But he'll have to be mighty clean for that,' I says to myself.

"Then it jumps into my head, 'What if he don't want to make a fresh start? If he don't, what will you do—lie to her, and say he is dead? That would be better than the truth. But then, suppose he should turn up in Peoria? That would be worse than ever. I'll have to interview him, and find out.'

"So next afternoon, when things were slack, I walks down the track past the stock yards to where he was whittling in the shade of a mesquite, sitting cross-legged on the ground, with a can of water heating on a little fire to steam the wood so it would go into the bottle without breaking. He motions me to a place beside him like he was a king sitting on velvet rugs, instead of bare ground and gravel, and me a foreign prince come to talk diplomacy.

"I watches him for a minute, the bright steel sliding through the pine with a crisp, cheerful, sound like breaking soda crackers between your fingers, and his fingers turning the wood over and over as he worked. He was cutting on a wheel. When he had finished the last spoke, blown the dust off, and laid it in a little pile of other parts beside him, I opens up the conversation.

"The operator, Ike Moss, and I had a little argument last night while we were eating supper at the Lone Star,' I begins. 'And not being able to settle the dispute between ourselves as to which is right, I'm going to put the case to you, seeing as you are a man what has traveled a sight, no doubt, and has seen more life than a professor with a microscope.'

"Blaze away,' he says, picking up another piece of wood and socking his knife into it.

"Well, it's this,' I says, bucking into the job without gloves. 'Supposing a man has gone to the bad once in his life—

took somebody else's money, spent it in riotous living, and then has gone still further to the bad, drinking and drifting, until he has lost all admiration for himself and is forgetful of his folks. Say he has been that way for several years.'

"Yes,' he says, looking up at me and his knife not biting into the wood quite so fast.

"And then there comes the chance for the fellow to square up the deal, and start in at where he left the path. Would the fellow do it or could he do it? Now I argues that he could—that a man goes down step by step like going down stairs, and that he can come back up the same way—just like one going from the sunlight into the cellar for an apple and coming back with it in his hand, none the worse for having been in the dark for a spell. But the operator advances the theory that a man slips to hell on a toboggan slide and can't climb back the same road. What's your opinion in the matter, having seen a lot more of life and of people who were down than I have?

"He stops his whittling and sits there a minute making mumble-peg throws with his knife, before he speaks.

"Well,' he says, slow and steady like he was picking every word he used, 'you put it to me like a story, so I'll answer it like it was a story. There was just such a fellow once, we will say, a good-for-nothing chap who didn't know he was good for nothing, but was stuck on himself like he was the whole works. The fellow was a kind of clerk and didn't get as much money as he needed to pay his barber and laundry and tailor bills and to go to the theatre as many times as he wanted to—and have a few drinks afterwards with his friends. He thinks that life wouldn't be life with any of those things missing, so he puts his hand, say this fellow does, into the pocket of the man he is working for; when it comes out, there is about fifteen hundred dollars sticking to his fingers.

"That looks like a mint of money to the fellow who has been getting nine a week and he thinks he has got happiness by the short-hairs; so he jumps sudden into Mexico to shake the law and live

happy ever after. He boozes and lives high till the money is gone; then he discovers that there wasn't no happiness in it. He'd been a church man once, maybe, and had had good folks who had pumped good notions into his head when he was small. He's pretty far over the hill, but he takes a grip on himself and says he will work till that money is repaid, and then start over again in life. He believes he can do it. So he hires out to a cabinet-maker who puts him at fancy carving. The fellow takes to the work, and in time makes good wages. But he isn't none too strong bodily; maybe he needs a stimulant after the day's work to bring him back to normal, or maybe he's got an appetite that isn't healthy—anyhow, he takes the stimulant. Maybe, too, the dust of the shop and the lack of air and of sunshine, and the slow climb he's trying to make back all get him to, thinking that he can't cut it; so one morning there isn't no carver's apprentice in the shop of the cabinet-maker, but a fellow with a two-edged appetite for bottled dampness going across the land on foot, hearing the birds sing and the waters tell their story, seeing the sun come up and the sun go down and the stars winking and blinking in between.

"And maybe this fellow gets to loving the open as much as he loves his booze and begins to think some, a thing he hasn't done much of. And he asks himself fool questions about where the winds come from, and what holds the stars up there so steady in their places, and tries to overhear what the trees say. Then perhaps he gets so far away from other people, that he begins to wonder at what they are trying to do—piling stones on top of stones, and steel and wood on top of that—jamming together in a huddle among the stones where the smoke keeps out the light and the sun and the stars—rushing about like ants on the hill till they drop and other ants take their places to rush about in the same tracks and grooves until they drop too. Maybe all this looks to him as not having much

"Then again, suppose the fellow has sense to it.

a natural streak of the gambler in him, the same as a race horse has speed in it

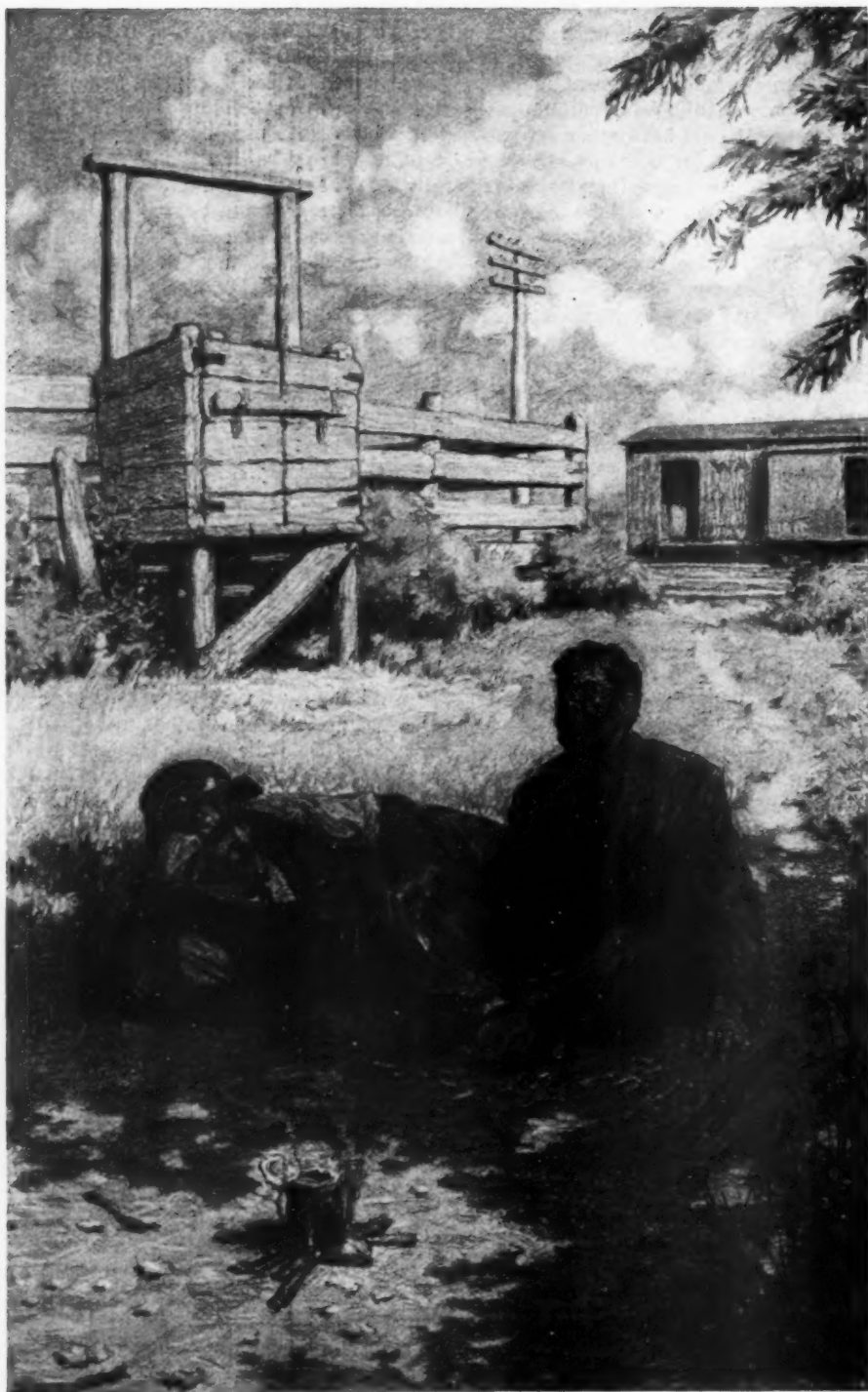
and can't help it; and he figures that life is a sort of gamble anyhow, and for a man living like him, not knowing where the next meal or bed is coming from, the biggest kind of gamble. On top of all that, booze gets him by the nose, and leads him in paths he likes. Why, put a fellow in that fix, and my answer is: he aint going to quit unless something tremendous takes hold of him—something bigger than he is. The truth is, it aint so much he can't quit, but he don't want to.

"Now my experience has maybe been something after the style of the fellow I've been talking about, or maybe it hasn't. But as for me, I don't want anything more than he has. A little booze, a little whittling, the open road, new faces, new lands, till the program is over and he quits, with his face shining like a fellow's does in class-meeting, who has been "in the way" for forty years, "enjoying religion."

"I saw then that there wasn't going to be any happy restoration of a wayward and lost uncle for a fond niece, as I had planned. So I figures that the best thing I can do is to get rid of him before the girl gets back. He used to be on the platform every time the train come in, begging for money, and I was afraid that she might come back and see him. For her to find him in his fix would be like hitting her on the head with an axe.

"So I orders him to finish up his whittling quick as he can, and not to be on the platform every time a train come in. I offered him money to stay away. But it wasn't the money he really wanted, he said. He wasn't living for money, but for adventure and entertainment. Consequently, every time the Mexican train would begin to puff up against the sky, and my heart to flop around loose in my ribs, thinking maybe the woman would be on it, here would come the whittler shuffling along the platform and line up, too.

"I kept thinking each day that it would be his last, but the operator after seeing the work he had done for me, takes it into his head to have a model of the semaphore cut and put in a bottle, and the section foreman orders his hand-car whittled, so the fellow has plenty of



"'I argues that a man goes down step by step'"



work, and hangs on, dirty and drunken and hateful—and never missing a train.

"Maybe a month passes that way, and I begin to lose sleep over that woman, thinking as how something has happened to her down there among the 'Greasers,' and what might happen, if she got back safe, and run against the Whittler. I was thinking of all this one day, sitting in the sun, waiting for the train, when the Whittler comes up and stands grinning before me.

"When 'One-hundred-and-four' goes east,' he says, knowing it would please me, 'there's going to be a falling off in the population of this place by one.'

"Are you sure going?' I asks, looking up at him.

"Sure thing,' he says.

"And whereabouts will you land?' I asks, feeling sorry for the place.

"Peoria, maybe,' he answers, grinning like a fool.

"Peoria!' I says, getting on my feet. 'And what in God's name are you going there for?'

"See my folks maybe.' And he walks away toward the water-tank whistling, with his hat cocked sideways on his head and that flat bundle bobbing on his back.

"Hold on,' I hollers soon as I could get my lips wet enough to work. I didn't intend that he should go to Peoria, if I could stop him; and I fancied I could. But he didn't stop, and the train coming in just then, I couldn't charge after him.

"I loads up the trunks, and yanks the transfers across to the main-line side. The passengers were already over there standing along the curbing, and crowding out onto the track to watch 'One-hundred-and-four,' which was coming into sight over the Boyd Hill, five miles below. I has about five minutes idle, and begins to eye the crowd, feeling somehow that I was going to see something. And I did.

"There on the edge of the crowd, not in it nor out of it, stood the woman, fresher and sweeter looking than ever. I got tight all at once in the chest, like somebody had tied a wire about me, and felt weak up and down my legs, same as I felt once after six weeks of fever. It was her, same gray clothes, same lemon-col-

ored hair blowing into her eyes. The only difference that I could see was that she had a white, drawn-work thing tied over her head—and there was a man with her. She had hold of his arm, and was looking up at him, talking. I knew it wasn't no stranger she was chinning that way, or thought it wasn't.

"Then I thinks all at once, 'maybe it's her uncle, and it's all a mistake I have made about the Whittler being the man. She's found him down there, just as the tourist folks told her and is bringing him back to tramp in the straight and narrow path. Joe Ware,' I says, 'you are a fool, same as you have always been. The idea of your taking that booze-drinking piece of wandering garbage to be the relative of that sort of a woman!'

"I noticed that the man didn't look so old as I thought an uncle ought to look, but I knew that uncles didn't have to be any older than their nieces and nephews, and remembered a case where the uncle was younger. Anyhow, she'd found him and looked glad as a dog with two tails. I began to feel glad, too, in a sympathetic way—yet not so glad neither. I've got a jealous streak somewhere in the interior of my anatomy. But I thought I'd go give her the warm hand, and I feels of my tie to see if it was straight and wished that I wasn't in my shirt sleeves. But she sees me before I gets started, and comes over, pulling the man after her.

"Mr. Baggage-man,' she says, like a canary, 'this is Mr. Dunlap, of the Methodist Mission.'

"Pleased to meet you, Mr. Dunlap,' I says, wondering if he was the uncle, in a reformed state.

"The woman stands by, smiling at the genial way in which we mixes. 'Relative of yours, I suppose?' I says, turning to her.

"My husband,' she says, brushing back the hair.

"What!' I asks, letting go his hand like it was a live wire.

"My husband,' she repeats, softly. 'He helped me to look for poor uncle. We got acquainted that way and he was so nice—but, have you seen anything of him?' she finishes.

"Noap,' I says, jerking the word out.



"'I didn't either,' she says, and it seems to me the look came into her eyes again I'd seen there when we first met, here on this platform. 'I looked everywhere—Mr. Dunlap helping me,' she went on, 'but it didn't do any good. We didn't even find anybody that had seen him.'"

"I was afraid she was going to cry and felt uneasy.

"'That's too bad,' was all I managed to say.

"Then 'One-hundred-and-four,' five minutes late and half her boxes smoking, comes in with a rattle and a bang. The missionary man grabs the woman by the arm and says: 'It's coming, Amelia, dear,' and I lays hold of my truck and pulls it alongside the baggage-car.

"'What's the matter with you to-day?' the man inside asks, when I didn't laugh at one of his jokes. 'Somebody dead around here that you are so blamed mournful?'

"'The operator killed a sparrow this morning that was trying to build in the semaphore,' I says, and heaves up a little

steamer trunk with green roses on the side. 'And be careful with that box.'

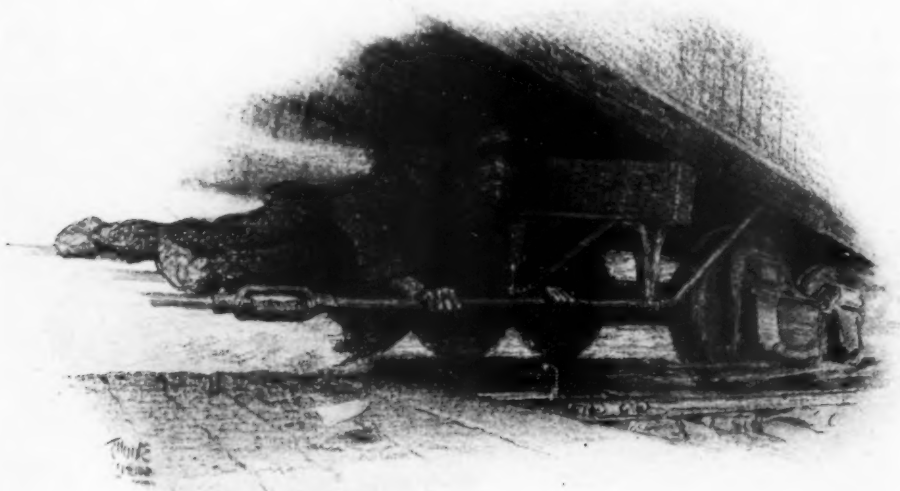
"'That all?' he asks.

"'All,' I says, and jumps down and pulls my truck back.

"Then the conductor waves a 'high-ball' signal to the engineer; and 'One-hundred-and-four,' with a soft gritting of the wheels on the rail and the noise of the porters slamming down the vestibule floors, begins to stretch herself for the run.

"As the chair-car goes by I looks up, and there is the little woman at the window, smiling and waving her hand. I takes off my hat and answers, watching till she is out of sight. Then I stands there, head down, watching the wheels click over a loose joint. The last set of trucks strikes it with a sharp pound and I hears somebody holler, cheery-like, 'Good-by;' and there, with his fuzzy face looking out at me from among the wheels and rods, and waving a dirty hand, was—the Whittler!

"'Blamed funny world this,' I says, and grabs hold of my truck."



"Looking out at me from among the wheels and rods was—the Whittler"

# The Remittance Man

Steele of the Royal Mounted Finds The Girl

BY JAMES O. CURWOOD

Author of "Beauty Proof," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY GAYLE HOSKINS

PHILIP STEELE, of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, was at Hymers when the Limited plunged down the embankment into Blind Indian River. The first word of it came over the wire from Bleak House station a little before midnight while he and the agent were playing cribbage. Pink-cheeked little Gunn, agent, operator, and one-third of the total population of Hymers, had lifted a peg to make a count when his hand stopped in mid air, and with a gasping break in his voice he sprang to his feet. The instrument on the little table near the window was clicking frantically. It was Billinger, at Bleak House, shrieking out the first news, crying out for headquarters, clear lines, the right of way. The Transcontinental — engine, tender, baggage car, two coaches and a sleeper, had gone to the devil. Those, in his excitement, were his first words. From fifty to a hundred were dead. Gunn almost sobbed Billinger's next words to the line. It was not an accident! Human hands had torn up three sections of rail. The same human hands had placed a two ton boulder in the right of way. He did not know whether the express car—or what little remained of it—had been robbed or not.

From midnight until two o'clock the lines were hot. A wrecking train was on its way from the east, another from division headquarters to the west. Ceaselessly headquarters demanded new information, and bit by bit the terrible tragedy was told, even as the men and women in it died, and the few souls from the prairies around Bleak House station fought to save lives. Then a new word crept in on

the wires. It called for Philip Steele, at Hymers. It commanded him in the name of the Inspector of the Royal Mounted to reach Bleak House station without delay. What he was to do when he arrived at the scene of the wreck was left to his own judgment—a sample of the magnificent confidence placed in its men by this most perfectly organized of all the world's police forces.

The wire from MacGregor aroused Philip from the stupor of horror into which he had fallen. Gunn's girlish face was as white as a sheet.

"I've got a jigger," he said. "You can take it. It's forty miles to Bleak House and you can make it in three hours. There wont be a train for six."

Philip scribbled a few words for Inspector MacGregor and shoved them into Gunn's nervous hand. While the operator was sending them off he rolled a cigarette, lighted it, and buckled on his revolver belt. Then Gunn hurried him through the door and they lifted the velocipede on to the track.

"Wire Billinger that I'm coming," called Philip as the other started him off with a running shove. "Tell him to find out all that he can—"

As the sun was rising in a burning August glare over the edge of the parched prairies, he saw ahead of him the unpainted board shanty that was called Bleak House station, and a few moments later he saw a man run out into the middle of the track and stare down at him from under the shade of his hands. It was Billinger, his English-red face as white as he had left Gunn's, his shirt

in rags, arms bare, and his tremendous blonde mustaches crisped and seared by fire. Close to the station, fastened to posts, were two saddle horses. A mile beyond these things a thin film of smoke clouded the sky.

As the jigger stopped, Philip jumped from his seat and held out a blistered hand.

"I'm Steele—Philip Steele, of the Northwest Mounted," he greeted.

"And I'm Billinger—agent," said the other. Philip noticed that the hand that gripped his own was raw and bleeding. "I got your word, and I've received instructions from the department to place myself at your service. Mrs. Billinger is at the key. I've found the trail and I've got two horses. But there aint another man who'll leave up there for love o' God or money. It's horrible! Two hours ago you'd have heard their screams from where you're standing—the hurt, I mean. They wont leave the wreck—not a man, and I don't blame 'em."

A pretty, brown-haired young woman had come to the door and Billinger ran to her. "Good-by," he cried, taking her for a moment in his big arms. "Take care of the key!" He turned as quickly to the horses, talking as they mounted. "It was robbery," he said—and they set off at a canter side by side. "There was two hundred thousand in currency in the express car, and it's gone. I found their trail this morning, going into the north. They're hitting for what we call the Bad Lands over beyond the Coyote, twenty miles from here. I don't suppose there's any time to lose—"

He swung around in his saddle to look questioningly at his companion.

"No," said Philip. "How many are there?"

"Four—mebby more."

Billinger started his horse into a gallop and Philip purposely held his mount a few yards behind to look at the man ahead of him. The first law of MacGregor's teaching was to study men, and to suspect. It was the first law of the splendid service of which he was a part—and so he looked hard at Billinger. The Englishman was hatless. His sandy hair was cropped short, and his mus-

taches floated out like flexible horns from the sides of his face. His shirt was in tatters. In one place it was ripped clean of the shoulder and Philip saw a purplish bruise where the flesh was bare. He knew these for the marks of Billinger's presence at the wreck. Now the man was equipped for other business. A huge "forty-four" hung at his waist, a short carbine swung at his saddle bow; and there was something in the manner of his riding, in the hunch of his shoulders, and in the vicious sweep of his long mustaches, that satisfied Philip he was a man who could use them. He rode up alongside him with new confidence. They were coming to the top of a knoll, and at the summit Billinger stopped and pointed down into a hollow a quarter of a mile away.

"It'll be a loss of time to go down there," he said, "and it will do no good. See that thing that looks like a big log in the river? That's the top of the day coach. It went in right side up, and the conductor—who wasn't hurt—says there were twenty people in it. We watched it settle from the shore, and we couldn't do a thing—while they were dying in there like so many caged rats! The other coach burned, and that heap of stuff you see there is what's left of the Pullman and the baggage car. There's twenty-seven dead stretched out along the track, and a good many hurt. Great Heavens, listen to that!"

He shuddered, and Philip shuddered, at the wailing sound of grief and pain that came up to them.

"It'll be a loss of time—to go down," repeated the agent.

"Yes, it would be a loss of time," agreed Philip.

His blood was burning at fever heat when he raised his eyes from the scene below to Billinger's face. Every fighting fiber in his body was tingling for action, and at the responsive glare which he met in Billinger's eyes, he thrust his hand half over the space that separated them.

"We'll get 'em, Billinger," he cried. "By God, we'll get 'em!"

There was something ferocious in the crush of the other's hand. The English-

man's teeth gleamed for an instant between his seared mustaches as he heeled his mount into a canter along the back of the ridge. Five minutes later the knoll dipped again into the plain and at the foot of it Billinger stopped his horse for a second time and pointed to fresh hoof-marks in the prairie sod. Philip jumped from his horse and examined the ground.

"There are five in the gang, Billinger," he said shortly. "All of them were galloping—but one." He looked up to catch Billinger leaning over the pommel of his saddle staring at something almost under his horse's feet.

"What's that?" he demanded. "A handkerchief?"

Philip picked it up—a dainty bit of fine linen, crumpled and sodden by dew, and held it out between the forefinger and thumb of both hands.

"Yes, and a woman's handkerchief. Now what the devil—"

He stopped at the look in Billinger's face as he reached down for the handkerchief. The square jaws of the man were set like steel springs, but Philip noticed that his hand was trembling.

"A woman in the gang," he laughed, as Philip mounted.

They started out at a canter, Billinger still holding the bit of linen close under his eyes. After a little he passed it back to Philip, who was riding close beside him.

"Something happened last night," he said, looking straight ahead of him, "that I can't understand. I didn't tell my wife. I haven't told anyone. But I guess you ought to know. It's interesting, anyway—and has made a wreck of my nerves." He wiped his face with a blackened rag which he drew from his hip pocket. "We were working hard to get out the living, leaving the dead where they were for a time, and I had crawled under the wreck of the sleeper. I was sure that I had heard a cry, and crawled in among the débris, shoving a lantern ahead of me. About where Berth Number 10 should have been, the timbers had telescoped upward, leaving an open space four or five feet high. I was on my hands and knees, bare-headed, and my lantern lighted up things as plain as day. At first I saw

nothing, and was listening again for the cry when I felt something soft and light sweeping down over me, and I looked up. Heavens—"

Billinger was mopping his face again, leaving streaks of char-black where the perspiration had started.

"Pinned up there in the mass of twisted steel and broken wood was a woman," he went on. "She was the most beautiful thing I have ever looked upon. Her arms were reaching down to me; her face was turned a little to one side, but still looking at me—and all but her face and part of her arms was smothered in a mass of red gold hair that fell down to my shoulders. I could have sworn that she was alive. Her lips were red, and I thought for a moment that she was going to speak to me. I could have sworn, too, that there was color in her face, but it must have been something in the lantern light and the red gold of her hair, for when I spoke, and then reached up, she was cold."

Billinger shivered, and urged his horse into a faster canter.

"I went out and helped with the injured then. I guess it must have been two hours later when I returned to take out her body. But the place where I had seen her was empty. She was gone. At first I thought some of the others had carried her out, and I looked among the dead and injured. She was not among them. I searched again when day came, with the same result. No one has seen her. She has completely disappeared—and with the exception of my shanty there isn't a house within ten miles of here where she could have been taken. What do you make of it, Steele?"

Philip had followed his words with tense interest. "Perhaps you didn't return to the right place," he suggested. "Her body may still be in the wreck."

Billinger glanced toward him with a nervous laugh.

"But it *was* the right place," he said. "She had evidently not gone to bed, and was dressed. When I returned I found a part of her skirt in the débris above. A heavy tress of her hair had caught around a steel ribbing, and *it was cut off!* Someone had been there during my absence and had taken the body. I—I'm almost ready



to believe that I was mistaken, and that she was alive. I found nothing there, nothing—that would prove death.”

“Is it possible—” began Philip, holding out the handkerchief.

It was not necessary for him to finish. Billinger understood, and nodded his head.

“That’s what I’m thinking,” he said. “Is it possible? What in God’s name would *they* want of her, unless—”

“Unless she was alive,” added Philip. “Unless one or more of the scoundrels, searching for valuables in there during the excitement, saw her and carried her off with their other booty. It’s up to us, Billinger!”

Leaning low over their saddles they galloped into the North. For a time the trail of the five outlaws was so distinct that they rode at a speed which lathered their horses. Then the short prairie grass, crisp and sun-dried, gave place to a broad sweep of wire grass above which the yellow backs of coyotes were visible and now and then they bobbed up in their quick short leaps to look over the top of it. In this brown sea all trace of the trail was lost from the saddle and both men dismounted. Foot by foot they followed the faint signs ahead of them, while over their backs the sun rose higher and began to burn with the dry furnace-like heat that had scorched the prairies. So slow was their progress that after a time Billinger straightened himself with a nervous curse. The perspiration was running in dirty streaks down his face. Before he had spoken Philip read the fear that was in his eyes and tried to hide the reflection of it in his own. It was too hot to smoke, but he drew forth a case of cigarettes and offered one to Billinger. The agent took one, and both lighted in silence, eyeing each other over their matches.

“Wont do,” said Billinger, spitting on his match before tossing it among the grass. “It’s ten miles across this wire-dip, and we wont make it until night—if we make it at all. I’ve got an idea. You’re a better trailer than I am, so you follow this through. I’ll ride on and see if I can pick up the trail somewhere in the edge of the clean prairie. What do you say?”

“Good!” said Philip. “I believe you can do it.”

Billinger leaped into his saddle and was off at a gallop. Scarcely had he gone when Philip pulled the linen handkerchief from his pocket, and held it for a moment crushed in his hand while he looked after the agent. Then, slowly, he raised it to his face. For a full minute he stood with the dainty fabric pressed to his lips and nose. Back there—when he had first held the handkerchief—he thought that he had *imagined*. But now he was sure. Faintly the bit of soiled fabric breathed to him the sweet scent of hyacinth. His eyes shone in an eager blood-shot glare as he watched Billinger disappear over a roll in the prairie a mile away. Hyacinth!

“Making a fool of yourself again,” he muttered, bending over the trail. “There are other women in the world who use hyacinth beside her. And there are other women with red gold hair—and pretty, pretty as Billinger says she was, aren’t there?”

He laughed again, but there was something uneasy and unnatural in the laugh. And twice—three times he took out the handkerchief before he reached the rise in the prairie over which Billinger had disappeared. The agent had been gone an hour when the trail of the outlaws brought him to the knoll. From the top of it Philip looked over the prairie to the north.

A horseman was galloping toward him. He knew that it was Billinger, and stood up in his stirrups so that the other would see him. A mile away the agent stopped and Philip could see him signalling frantically with both arms. Five minutes later Philip rode up to him. Billinger’s horse was half winded, and in Billinger’s face there were tense lines of excitement.

“There’s someone out on the prairie,” he called, as Philip reined in. “I couldn’t make out a horse, but there’s a man in the trail beyond the second ridge. I believe they’ve stopped to water their horses and feed at a little lake just this side of the rough country.”

Billinger had loosened his carbine and was examining the breech. He glanced anxiously at Philip’s empty saddle-straps.





With the girl's head sheltered against his breast, Philip rode

"It'll be long range shooting, if they've got guns," he said. "Sorry I couldn't find a gun for you."

Philip drew one of his two long-barreled service revolvers and his lips set in a grim and reassuring smile as he followed the bobbing head of a coyote a couple of hundred yards away.

"We're not considered proficient in the service unless we can make use of these things at three hundred yards, Billinger," he replied, replacing the weapon in its holster. "If it's a running fight I'd rather have 'em than a carbine. If it *isn't* a running fight we'll come in close."

Philip looked at the agent as they galloped side by side through the long grass, and Billinger looked at him. In the face of each there was something which gave the other assurance. For the first time it struck Philip that his companion was something more than a telegraph operator at Bleak House station. He was a fighter. He was a man of the stamp needed down at Headquarters, and he was bound to tell him so before this affair was over. He was thinking of it when they came to the second ridge.

Five miles to the north and west loomed the black line of the Bad Lands. To a tenderfoot they would not have appeared to be more than a mile distant. Midway in the level prairie between there toiled a human figure. Even at that distance Philip and Billinger could see that it was moving, though with a slowness that puzzled them. For several minutes they stood breathing their horses, their eyes glued on the object ahead of them. Twice in a space of a hundred yards it seemed to stumble and fall. The second time that it rose Philip knew that it was standing motionless. Then it disappeared again. He stared until the rolling heat waves of the blistered prairie stung his eyes. The object did not rise. Blinking, he looked at Billinger, and through the sweat and grime of the other's face he saw the question that was on his own lips. Without a word they spurred down the slope, and after a time Billinger swept to the right and Philip to the left, each with his eye searching the low prairie grass. The agent saw the thing first, still a hundred yards to his right. He was

off his horse when Philip whirled at his shout and galloped across to him.

"It's her—the girl I found in the wreck," he said. Something seemed choking him. His neck muscles twitched and his long, lean fingers were digging into his own flesh.

In an instant Philip was on his feet. He saw nothing of the girl's face, hidden under a mass of hair in which the sun burned like golden fire. He saw nothing but the crumpled, lifeless form, smothered under that shining mass, and yet in this moment he *knew*. With a fierce cry he dropped upon his knees and drew away the girl's hair until her lovely face lay revealed to him in all the terrible pallor and stillness of death.

"Water, Billinger," commanded Philip. "She's overcome by the heat, and it—"

Billinger unhooked his water canteen swiftly, and together they knelt upon the prairie, with the girl between them. And as they worked to bring the first faint flush of life back into her face Philip told the story of something that had happened long ago away up in the frozen Barrens of Fort Lac Bain.

At last, when they saw life was returning, Philip mounted his horse and Billinger lifted the girl very gently and gave her to him. Then, with Billinger leading in the trail of the outlaws, they set off at a walk through the sickening sun-glare for the water-hole in the edge of the Bad Lands.

## II

Hunched over, with the girl's head sheltered against his breast, Philip rode a dozen paces behind the agent. It seemed as if the sun had suddenly burst into molten fire upon the back of his neck, and for a time it made him dizzy. In this dizziness, while his horse followed Billinger's without guidance, his mind leaped back to the first night when away up in the Arctic snows of Lac Bain he had first met this girl. He had told Billinger a part of the story, but not all. He had told him how Colonel Becker, one of the big London officials of the Hudson's Bay Company, had come across from Fort Churchill with his daughter,

how he had gone out to meet them on the trail, and how, after that, he had fallen in love with her. Then he had lied a little to Billinger, for it was impossible to tell him the whole truth. It was the truth that burned in his brain now. As vividly as though he were living the thing over again he saw the girl's sweet face as he had seen it that first night in the light of the camp fire, when in a spirit of fun she had let him believe that she was the old Colonel's youthful wife, and had made the Colonel himself join in her play.

Even *then* he had loved her. And when she came to the post, still as the Colonel's wife, there had quickly followed the flirtation between her and Bucky Nome. With his eyes closed he went over the old scene in the cabin, when he had fought Bucky Nome, and had driven him from the post to save the Colonel's honor—and the Colonel's wife. That same night he had written his terrible condemnation to the girl whom he supposed to be a wife, and had left Lac Bain. Months later a letter came from the Colonel, telling him that it had all been a dreadful mistake, and explaining the jest which had led to such unfortunate consequences. He wondered what Billinger would say and do if he knew all this—and if he knew that he had loved this girl, and fought for her, and run away from her all within the space of a few hours!

It was Billinger who brought him back to himself. The agent waited for them, and when he swung over in one stirrup to look at the girl it was the animal ferocity in his face, and not his words, that aroused Philip.

"She's coming to," he said, straining to keep the tremble out of his voice. "I don't believe she's much hurt. You take this canteen. I'm going ahead."

He gave Philip the water, and leaned over again to gaze into the girl's face.

"I don't believe she's much hurt," he repeated in a hoarse, dry whisper. "You can leave her at the water-hole just beyond that hill off there—and then you can follow me."

Philip clutched the girl tighter to him as the agent rode off. He did not at first

see the faint flush that had returned into her cheeks, nor the reddening of her lips, the gentle tremor of her silken lashes. Moaning her name, he cried out his love for her, again and again, even as her eyes opened and she stared up into the face of the man who had come to her first at Lac Bain, and who had fought for her there. For a breath or two the wonder of this thing that was happening held her speechless and still lifeless, though her senses were adjusting themselves with lightning swiftness. When Philip glanced down again her glorious blue eyes were looking at him with all the sanity in the world.

A moment there was silence—a silence of even the breath in Philip's body, the beating of his heart. His arms loosened a little. He drew himself up rigid, and the girl lifted her head a trifle, so that their eyes met squarely and a world of question and understanding passed between them in an instant. As swift as morning glow, a flush mounted into the girl's face, then ebbed as swiftly, and Philip cried:

"You were hurt—hurt back there in the wreck. But you're safe now. The train was wrecked by outlaws. We came out after them, and I—I found you—back there on the prairie. You're safe now."

His arms tightened about her again.

"You're all right now," he repeated gently. He was not conscious of the sobbing break in his voice, or of the great, throbbing love that it breathed to her. He tried to speak calmly. "There's nothing wrong—*nothing*. The heat made you sick. But you're all right now—"

From beyond the hill there came a sound that made him break off with a sudden, quick breath. It was the sharp, stinging report of Billinger's carbine! Once, twice, three times—and then there followed more distant shots!

"Good Heavens, he's come up with them!" he cried. The fury of fight, of desire for vengeance, blazed anew in his face. There was pain in the grip of his arms about the girl. "Do you feel strong—strong enough to ride fast?" he asked. "There's only one man with me, and there are five of them. It's murder to let him fight it alone!"

"Yes—yes—" whispered the girl, her arms tightening round him. "Ride fast—or put me off. I can follow—"

It was the first time he had heard her voice since that last evening up at Lac Bain, nearly a year before, and the sound of it thrilled him.

"Hold tight!" he breathed.

Like the wind they swept across the prairie and up the slope of the hill. At the top Philip reined in. Three or four hundred yards distant lay a thick clump of poplar, and a thousand yards beyond that the first black escarpments of the Bad Lands. In the space between a horseman was galloping fiercely to the west. It was not Billinger. With a quick movement Philip slipped the girl to the ground, and when she sprang a step back, looking up at him in white terror, he had whipped out one of his big service revolvers.

"There's a little lake among those trees," he said. "Wait there—until I come back!"

He raced down the slope—not to cut off the flying horseman—but toward the clump of poplars. It was Billinger he was thinking of now even more than of the girl he was leaving. The agent had fired three shots. There had followed other shots, *not* Billinger's, and after that his carbine had remained silent. Billinger was among the poplars. He was hurt, or dead.

A well worn trail, beaten down by transient rangers, cut through the stunted growth of prairie timber, and without checking his speed Philip sped along it, only his head and shoulders and his big revolver showing over his horse's ears. A hundred paces and the timber gave place to a sandy dip, in the center of which was the water-hole. The dip was not more than an acre in extent. Up to his knees in the "hole" was Billinger's riderless horse, and a little way up the sand was Billinger, doubled over on his hands and knees beside two black objects that Philip knew were men, stretched out like the dead back at the wreck. Billinger's yellow-mustached face, pallid and twisted with pain, looked over them as Philip galloped across the open and sprang out of his saddle. With a terrible

grimace he raised himself to his knees, anticipating the question on Philip's lips.

"Nothing very bad, Steele," he said. "One of the cusses pinked me through the leg, and broke it, I guess. Painful, but not killing. Now look at *that*!"

He nodded at the two men lying with their faces turned up to the hot glare of the sun. One look was enough to tell Philip that they were dead, and that it was not Billinger who had killed them. Their bearded faces had stiffened in the first agonies of death. Their breasts were soaked with blood and their arms had been drawn down close to their sides. From them Philip quickly looked back at Billinger. In his hand the agent held a package, which he had torn open. A second and similar package lay in the sand in front of him.

"Currency!" he gasped. "It's a part of the money stolen from the express car. The two hundred thousand was done up in five packages, and here are two of 'em. They were dead when I came, and each had a package lying on his breast. The fellow who pinked me was just leaving the dip!"

He dropped the package and began ripping down his trouser leg with a knife. Philip dropped on his knees beside him, but Billinger motioned him back.

"It's not bleeding bad," he said. "I can fix it alone."

"You're certain, Billinger—"

"Sure!" laughed the agent, though he was biting his lips until they were flecked with blood. "There's no need of *you* wasting time!"

For a moment Philip clutched the other's hand.

"We can't understand what this means, old man—the girl—the money here, and all that, but we'll find out soon!"

"Leave that confounded carbine," exclaimed Billinger as his companion rose to mount. "I did rotten work with it, and the other fellow fixed me with a pistol. That's why I'm not bleeding very much."

The outlaw had disappeared into the black edge of the bad lands when Philip dashed up out of the dip into the plain. There was only one break ahead of him and toward this he urged his horse. In the entrance to the break was another



sandy but waterless dip, and across this trailed the hoofprints of the outlaws' mounts, two at a walk—one at a gallop. At one time, ages before, the break had been the outlet of a stream pouring itself out between jagged and cavernous walls of rock from the black heart of the upheaved country within. Now the bed of it was strewn with broken trap and masses of boulders, cracked and dried by centuries of blistering sun. Philip's heart beat a little faster as he urged his horse ahead, and not for an instant did his cocked revolver drop from its guard over the mare's ears. He knew, if he overtook the outlaws in retreat, that there would be a fight, and that it would be three against one. That was what he hoped for. It was an ambush that he dreaded. He realized that if the outlaws stopped and waited for him he would be at a terrible disadvantage. In open fight he was confident. His prairie bred mount took the rough trail at a swift canter, evading the boulders and knife-edged trap in the same guarded manner that she galloped over prairie dog and badger holes out upon the plain. Twice in the ten minutes that followed their entrance into the chasm Philip saw movement ahead of him, and each time his revolver leaped to it. Once it was a wolf, again the swiftly moving shadow of an eagle sweeping with spread wings between him and the sun. He watched every concealment as he approached, and half swung in his saddle in passing, ready to fire.

A quick turn in the creek bed, where the rock walls hugged in close, and his mare planted her forefeet with a suddenness that nearly sent him over her head. Directly in their path, struggling to rise from among the rocks, was a riderless horse. Two hundred yards beyond a man on foot was running swiftly up the chasm, and a pistol shot beyond him two others on horseback had turned and were waiting.

"Lord, if I had Billinger's gun now!" groaned Philip.

At the sound of his voice and the pressure of his heels in her flank the mare vaulted over the animal in their path. The clatter of pursuing hoofs stopped the runner for an instant, and in that

same instant Philip halted and rose in his stirrups to fire. As his finger pressed the trigger there came to his ears a thrilling sound from *behind* him—the sharp galloping beat of steel upon rock! Billinger was coming—Billerger, with his broken leg and his carbine! He could have shouted for joy as he fired. Once—twice, and the outlaw was speeding ahead of him again, unhurt. A third shot and the man stumbled among the rocks and disappeared. There was no movement toward retreat on the part of the mounted men, and Philip listened as he slipped in fresh cartridges. His horse was panting; he could hear the excited and joyous tumult of his own heart—but above it all he heard the steady beat, beat, beat of those approaching hoofs! Billinger would be there soon—in time to use his carbine at a deadly range, while he got into closer quarters with his revolvers. God bless Billinger—and his broken leg!

He was filled with the craze of fight now and it found vent in a yell of defiance as he spurred on toward the outlaws. They were not going to run. They were waiting for him. He caught the gleam of the hot sun on their revolvers, and saw that they meant business as they swung a little apart to divide his fire. At one hundred yards Philip still held his gun at his side; at sixty he pulled in his mare, flattened along her neck like an Indian, his pistol arm swinging free between her ears. It was one of the cleverest fighting tricks of the service and he made the movement as the guns of the others leaped before their faces. Two shots sang over his head, so close that they would have swept him from the saddle if he had been erect. In another moment the rock-bound chasm echoed with the steady roar of the three revolvers. In front of the flaming end of his own gun Philip saw the outlaw on the right pitch forward in his saddle and fall to the ground. He sent his last shot at the man on the left and drew his second gun. Before he could fire again his mare gave a tremendous lunge forward and stumbled upon her knees, and with a gasp of horror Philip felt the saddle-girth slip as he swung to free himself.





Less than ten paces away the outlaw was deliberately taking aim at him

In the few terrible seconds that followed, Philip was conscious of two things—that death was very near, and that Billinger was a moment too late. Less than ten paces away the outlaw was deliberately taking aim at him, while his own pistol arm was pinned under the weight of his body. For a breath he ceased to struggle, looking up in frozen calmness at the man whose finger was already crooked to fire. When a shot suddenly rang out, it passed through him in a lightning flash that it was the shot intended for him. But he saw no movement in the outlaw's arm; no smoke from his gun. For a moment the man sat stiff and rigid in his saddle. Then his arm dropped. His revolver fell with a clatter among the stones. He slipped sidewise with a low groan and tumbled limp and lifeless almost at Philip's feet.

"Billerger—Billerger—"

The words came in a sob of joy from Philip's lips. Billinger had come in time—just in time! He struggled so that he could turn his head and look down the chasm. Yes, there was Billinger—a hundred yards away, hunched over his saddle. Billinger, with his broken leg, his magnificent courage, his—

With a wild cry Philip jerked himself free. Good God, it was *not* Billinger! It was the girl! She had slipped from the saddle—he saw her as she tottered a few steps among the rocks, and then sank down among them. With his pistol still in his hand he ran back to where Billinger's horse was standing. The girl was crumpled against the side of a boulder with her head in her arms—and she was crying. In an instant he was beside her, and all that he had ever dreamed of, all that he had ever hoped for, burst from his lips as he caught her and held her close against his breast. Yet he could never have told what he said. Only he knew that her arms were clasped about his neck, and that as she pressed her face against him she sobbed over, and over again, something about the old days at Lac Bain—and that she loved him, loved him! Then his eyes turned up the chasm, and what he saw there made him bend low behind the boulder, and brought a strange thrill into his voice.

"You will stay here—a little while," he whispered, running his fingers through her shining hair. There was a tone of gentle command in his words as he placed her against the rock. "I must go back for a few minutes. There is no danger—now."

He stooped and picked up the carbine which had fallen from her hand. There was one cartridge still in the breech. Replacing his revolver in its holster he rose above the rocks, ready to swing the rifle to his shoulder. Up where the outlaws lay a man was standing in the trail. He was making no effort to conceal himself, and did not see Philip until he was within fifty paces of him. Even then he did not show surprise. Apparently he was unarmed, and Philip dropped the muzzle of his carbine. The man motioned for him to advance, standing with a spread hand resting on either hip. He was hatless and coatless. His hair was long. His face was covered with a scraggly growth of red beard, too short to hide his sunken cheeks. He might have been a man half starved, and yet there was strength in his bony frame and his eyes were as keen as a serpent's.

"Got in just in time to miss the fun after all," he said coolly. "Queer game, wasn't it? I was ahead of you up as far as the water-hole. Saw what happened there."

Philip's hand dropped on the butt of his revolver.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"Me? I'm Blackstone—Jim Blackstone, from over beyond the Elbow. I guess everybody for fifty miles round here knows me. And I guess I'm the only one who knows what's happened—and why." He had stepped behind a huge rock that shut out the lower trail from them and Philip followed, his hand still on his revolver. "They're both dead," added the stranger, signifying with a nod of his head that he meant the outlaws. "One of them was alive when I came up, but I ran my knife between his ribs, and he's dead now."

"The devil!" cried Philip, half drawing his revolver at the ferocious leer in the other's face.

"Wait," exclaimed the man, "and see

if I'm not right. The man who was responsible for the wreck back there is my deadliest enemy—has been for years, and now I'm evening up with him. And I guess in the eyes of the law I've got a right to. What do you say?"

"Go on," said Philip.

The snake-like eyes of the man burned with a dull flame, and yet he spoke calmly.

"He came out here from England four years ago," he went on. "He was *forced* to come. Understand? He was such a devil back among his people—half a criminal even then—that he was sent out here on a regular monthly remittance. After that everything went the way of his younger brother. His father married again, and the second year he became even less than a remittance man, for his allowance was cut off. He was bad—bad from the start, and he went from bad to worse out here. He gambled, fought, robbed, and became the head of a gang of scoundrels as dangerous as himself. He brooded over what he considered his wrongs until he went a little mad. He lived to avenge himself. At the first opportunity he was prepared to kill his father and his step-mother. Then, a few weeks ago, he learned that these two were coming to America, and that on their way to Vancouver they would pass through Bleak House station. He went completely mad then, and planned to destroy them, and rob the train. You know how he and his gang did the job. After it was over, and they had got the money, he let his gang go on ahead of him while he went back to the wreck of the sleeper. He wanted to make sure that they were dead. Do you see?"

"Yes," said Philip tensely. "Go on."

"And when he got there," continued the other, bowing his head as he filled an old briar pipe with tobacco, "he found someone else. It's strange—and you may wonder how I know it all. But it's true. Back in England he had worshipped a young girl. Like the others, she detested him; and yet he loved her, and would have died for her. And in the wreck of

the sleeper he found—*her*. She was dead. He brought her out, and when no one was near carried her through the night to his horse. The knowledge that he had killed her—the only creature in the world that he loved—brought him back to sanity. It filled him with a new desire for vengeance—but vengeance of another kind. To achieve this vengeance he was compelled to leave her dead body miles out on the prairie. Then he hurried to overtake his comrades. As their leader he had kept possession of the money they had taken from the express car. The division was to be made at the water-hole. The gang was waiting for him there. The money was divided, and two of the gang rode ahead. The other two were to go in another direction so as to divide pursuit. The remittance man remained with them, and when the others had gone a distance he killed them both. He was sane now, you understand. He had committed a great crime and he was employing his own method of undoing it. Then he was going back to bury—*her*."

The man's voice broke. A great sob shook his frame. When he looked up Philip had drawn his revolver.

"And the remittance man—" he began.

"Is myself—Jim Blackstone—at your service."

The man turned his back to Philip, hunched over, as if bent in grief. For a moment he stood thus. There followed in that same moment the loud report of a pistol, and when Philip leaped to catch his tottering form the glaze of death was in the outlaw's eyes.

"I was going to do this—back there—beside her," he gasped faintly. A shiver passed through him and his head dropped limply forward.

Philip laid him with his face turned toward a rock and stepped out from his concealment. The girl had heard the pistol shot and was running up the trail.

"What was that?" she questioned, when he had hurried to her.

"The last shot, sweetheart," he answered softly, catching her in his arms. "We're going back to Billinger now."



"Who's your swell friend you steered into Danby's to-day?"

## The Dazzler

BY LUCILLE BALDWIN VAN SLYKE

Author of "The King's Messenger and the Pink Soap," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR WILLIAM BROWN

FOR the third time that June day, Frank Crayson had met "folks" from Millersville, a coincidence fairly startling when he recalled that until then he had never seen anyone from the little town since he had left it seven years before. Early in the morning he had been surprised by a glimpse of old Stanley, the "hotel keep," gaping at the newest and gaudiest hotel. He had fled from him, nervously sensitive to the sight of anyone even remotely connected with his

days of humiliation. He could not dodge the Carters when he was pushed against them in a crowded subway train later in the day but the merciful clatter of the rails let him evade many of Mrs. Carter's impertinently friendly questions and Joe Carter's curious glances.

He was thinking about them all as he walked slowly toward his accustomed lunching place, a bit chagrined because of his foolish shyness with them, when he heard a hearty voice calling his name



and saw Alf Saunders pushing through the crowd toward him. A bit fatter, a bit ruddier and a bit grayer, his father's friend caught both his hands and shook them roughly.

"Wall, boy!" he ejaculated with the indescribable north country twang that Frank had almost forgotten, "I thought ye must be dead and gone, it's so long since anybody's seen ye. Give me a start seeing some Crayson shoulders crossing that road. Moving along just the way your dad used to, bless him! Where ye been all this time, boy?"

Frank stammered an indistinct reply.

"Ye look fine!" went on Alf, slapping the Crayson shoulders joyously. "I'm glad to see it. Doing fine too? Married?"

Frank shook his head at the last query and flushed. He wished he had had the sense to lie about it, he thought hotly.

"Are you?" he retorted with feeble jocularity, for Alf had been the town bachelor when Frank had gone away.

"Am I?" laughed Alf. "Say, I've got three of the finest kids in Wallace county. I married Kate Gorman," he added, quite evidently as an afterthought. "Bought back the old Gorman home for her, put on a porch and a bay and it looks pretty good," he ended complacently. "How're you making out? Why don't you ever come up?"

"I'm doing fairly well," Frank answered, shifting his gaze uneasily. "I'm so busy I don't get away often, that's a fact."

The confidence he managed to get into his voice amazed him; it did not sound like his ordinary quiet tone, it was far more like the strident pomposity of Elkins junior. Evidently this borrowed assurance did not strike Alf as unnatural.

"I'm darned glad of it, boy," he said. "You do deserve it. Seen any of the folks to-day?"

"Why yes, I saw the Carters a little while ago and I thought I saw old Stanley this morning. What's up?"

"It would be mighty queer if you didn't see some of us," responded Saunders, half humorously. "Forty-seven of us come down last night on the excursion. Tickets good three days, single fare

for the round trip." He jogged Frank's elbow boyishly. "We haint so slow as we used to be. Mill has boomed things considerable of late years." He paused awkwardly. "None of us care for them as run it," he added with a gruff attempt at conciliation. Frank winced.

"Glad I saw you, Mr. Saunders," he broke in hastily. "I'm just going to lunch; if you haven't had yours, will you come along?"

Again he felt his voice intoning syllables with the perfunctory heartiness of Elkins junior.

"I'm with you," agreed the older man. "We still call it dinner noon-times and I'm hungry enough to eat you out of pocket. Funny thing, haint it? Thought I'd be awful busy seeing sights and folks in New York, but I dunno, somehow it's awful lonesome when it gets around time to eat."

"Lonesome 'round time to eat!" Though he resented the blunt rusticity of his townsman he thrilled at this apt definition of his own years of solitude and he felt a sudden gratitude toward Alf that made the man more tolerable as a companion. He was also pleasantly conscious of the fact that it was Monday, so that the frugal sum he allowed himself for his week's lunches was untouched. He stepped by his usual restaurant with its cheap bill of fare flaunting in its dusty window and edged toward a more pretentious district. Presently he found himself turning in at the place Elkins junior usually patronized and again he was conscious of his curious imitation of that youth.

Alf was plainly impressed by the modest luxury of the establishment and awed by the prices on the menu card the waiter tucked into his hand.

"I say, Frank," he blurted out, "this place would make old Stanley feel sick. You must be doing pretty good to eat here." He eyed his host with new respect as they waited for their luncheon but he still talked raspily of the great improvements in Millersville and the prosperity of her citizens.

"I 'spose though," he muttered thickly as he ate, "it was a blame good thing for you that you couldn't make that old mill



go, if it sent you down here to do better. 'Spose the mill would look pretty blame small to you now. Fisher's enlarged it though, made a big splurge about doing it, same as he does about doing anything from getting his boots blacked in the hotel to giving twenty-five cents to the church. Land sakes, he's the stingiest man! Don't know just how Ellen Hazard stands it after her easy going pa. Fisher keeps her dressed up good, has a spanking team to drive around with and she don't let on but what's she entirely satisfied. Pretty evident she didn't care who she married so long as it was the man that was running that mill. Cur'ous how a female will get her head sot on a thing like that." He glanced quickly from under his bushy eyebrows to the man across the table. "And say, Frank, she haint what she used to be on looks and manners. She's fatted up like her ma and she acts as stuck up as the whole White family put together."

Crayson could not trust himself to discuss the subject; he began to talk very rapidly of impersonal things, outwardly calm but inwardly his thoughts and feelings in a turmoil. He seemed to be living again his angry resentment at Fisher, the man who had taken from him his position at the mill and finally his sweetheart. Yet he was conscious of a sort of pity for the slender girl he had loved; he could hardly think of her as unhappy—or fat, he thought whimsically. After all, these petty bits of gossip made him feel a bit superior to these two people who had wrought such havoc with his youthful hopes. Superiority was a rare feeling with this self-deprecatory man who at twenty-one had lacked the strength to see his troubles in their true perspective, whose years of struggle in the city had been pitifully ineffectual because of his unbelief in himself. Even now his momentary manliness was cut short as he caught sight of the clock beyond their table. Sawyer & Elkins were very particular about their desk men returning promptly from lunch recess and he was several blocks farther uptown than usual. He brusquely pleaded a business engagement.

"Run along, run along!" agreed Alf

heartily. "I know just how it is myself. I suppose all my men are loafing on me while I'm down here." He gravely pocketed a number of the paper covered tooth-picks the waiter proffered. "I'm much obliged for my dinner and awful glad I saw you. Hope you come up home soon and show folks who you are. Ought to have done it long ago, just—" he stopped and winked meaningly—"just so's to let folks know there's no hard feeling."

Crayson reflected bitterly, as he hurried back to the office, that he was very little nearer going back to "show folks" than he had been seven years ago; indeed, it seemed to him that he was farther from success of any sort than he had ever been before. At first when he had come to New York, he had been fired with resentful ambitions, his one thought had been that some time he would go back in a blaze of glory to show Ellen Hazard who it was she had so carelessly thrown aside.

Even through the terrible struggle of keeping body and soul together that first awful year, he had been sustained by a faith in himself and his ability. Yet it was never an assertive faith, no son of "meek Deacon Crayson" could have had that. In his boyish outbursts of temper, his father had been wont to say, very gently, "There's a boy with his ma's determination." For little Mrs. Crayson had been possessed of a resolute will that at times made her formidable to her peace-loving giant of a husband. But though Frank may have inherited his mother's tenacity of purpose, he lacked her indomitable courage, he had only plodded on with the patient industry of his father. The brief flare of ambition had left him. To be sure, he sometimes indulged in vague hopes of good fortune that might sometime befall him; but that he should ever attain much by his own efforts he no longer believed. He had learned that in the scheme of life there was no glorious pinnacle for bookkeepers. He hated the only way whereby he had been able to live. By it he had won a frugal existence, a certain confidence in his trustworthiness; and he had managed by strictest economy to save a few hundred dollars.

He realized that it would be hopeless to attempt to speculate with so small a sum; he hoarded it with dull persistence and scorned its littleness. Of late he had lived in a numb sort of terror that this was all that would stand between him and starvation. He was in constant fear of losing his job. The firm, once prosperous, had steadily lost business since the panic; the hoped for boom in real estate had not come to pass and he realized keenly that if he should lose his position with Sawyer & Elkins his chances of work elsewhere were not worth very much. New York was full of expert accountants with nothing to account.

He was thinking of all these things as he posted his books and he stared grimly over a huge ledger at young Elkins emerging from his father's office.

Most people laughed at Bob Elkins. He was youthfully buoyant, youthfully foolish and grotesquely vain. Yet underneath all his nonsense was a feeling for business. Even his father, over critical of the youth's faults, knew that Bob's share of the business during the wretched year had been more than all the shrewd experience and training of the elder partners had been able to swing toward the firm.

To Frank's amazement the young man stopped in front of his desk.

"Oh, you Crayson fellow," he laughed jocularly, "who's your swell friend you steered into Danby's to-day?"

Frank smiled in spite of himself.

"That's the leading merchant of Millersville, the thriving metropolis where I was born," he answered. "He's seeing the town with forty-six other Millersvillians."

Elkins junior laughed patronizingly.

"He looked duly impressed—don't take much to dazzle those good souls, does it? Gad, when I go through some little towns in my punk touring car the natives turn oft and think there's a mag-nate going by."

"Millersville isn't that small," replied Crayson stiffly, a bit angered by the condescending tones in young Elkins' voice. "It's fairly large, they've got mills and—money, some of 'em," he ended bluntly.

Elkins junior chewed his cigar reflec-

tively. "Me for Millersville, some day," he observed solemnly. "Mazuma is getting painfully scarce everywhere else I've heard about."

On the boarding house steps that evening Crayson smoked soberly, unheeding the babble about him. It was too insufferably hot to go to his room. He began dreamily to think about the cool fragrance of summer evenings "up-state," the blissful quiet of vine shaded porches and shadowy lawns.

"With Ellen Hazard driving Fisher's spanking team," he reminded himself grimly and tried in vain to forget Millersville.

The voice of the fluffy little clerk on the top step floated down to him.

"Lordy," she giggled, "me spend twenty cents to go to Coney? Not just now. This time of year I'm that stingy with myself I'd walk to Heaven to save a nickel. Why, girls, I'm going home to Boonstown this summer for the first time in four years and I've got to have enough clothes to make the one good bluff of my life. A few glad rags and a nice silver mosquito netting purse with sixteen dollars in one dollar bills and a few shiny pennies in the corner look like the real ready money in Boonstown. Last time I went I put a whole dollar in the Presbyterian hat and they're talking about it yet. You can play rich for an awful little money in Boonstown and I love to play rich."

"Do you think it very commendable?" asked the sober Miss Briggs reflectively.

"Com—commendable!" giggled the fluffy one. "I don't know! I don't care! Makes me and friends up there awful happy and it makes the girls who married my old beaux furious! Just fun, I call it; gives 'em something to gossip about for weeks. Oh, now!" she sang out teasingly as the man at the foot of the steps glanced up at her. "I've gone and shocked Mr. Crayson! He never did anything so foolish as that! Never got so frivolous you wanted to dazzle folks, did you, Mr. Sobersides?"

His heart was beating so quickly with the stupendousness of the idea that swept over him that he could scarcely reply.

"I think," he said slowly, trying to

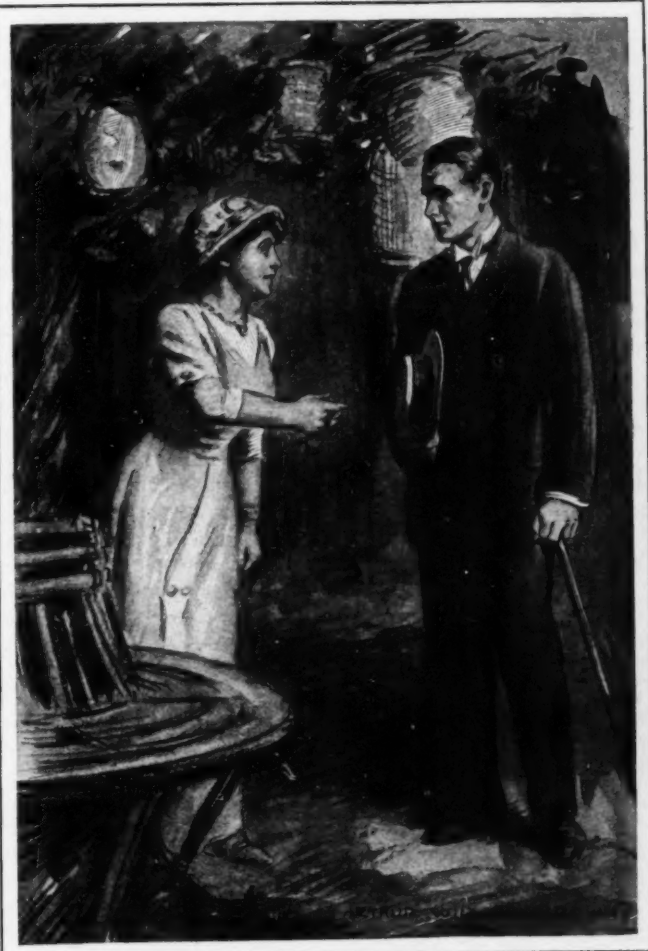
keep the excitement from his voice, "that most all of us would like to be—be daz- zlers, Miss Henderson, but we don't show your ingenuity about it — good night!" And he fled to his room.

It was typical of his whole existence that he should do the improvident thing she had put into his head with his usual methodical slowness. He planned it with utmost care. He had in all about eight hundred dollars. He sat down and thought out in great detail just what it was he actually wanted and needed to startle Millersville.

He wanted to look prosperous; plenty of well tailored clothes such as Elkins junior wore would accomplish that. He remembered with a sigh Elkins' whimsical boast about the excitement his automobile occasioned in small towns. It was out of the question for Crayson with the modest sum at his disposal until he found himself laughing aloud at the absurdly simple solution of the problem—he could rent one!

The days that followed were filled with ill suppressed excitement. He had not been so eagerly alert about anything since he was a boy. The plan began to unfold with all the charm of an exhilarating game.

As he watched young Elkins closely, he found to his amazement that many of the little things that had seemed to put that youth on a different plane of exis-



"Will you shake hands with me?" she asked nervously

tence were not as costly as he had supposed and that some of the things he had deemed essential were things he did not need at all. Yet for all that, he had to buy so recklessly that sometimes he was frightened; and the day his tailor's bill arrived he was fairly terrified; he was sure he must have been absolutely insane to have ordered such costly garments.

He was trembling when he asked the elder Elkins for a holiday; the old fear of losing his place was almost overwhelming.

"Why, no," drawled the gray haired one with maddening slowness as he tilted back in his chair and scrutinized his em-

ployee. "I guess we wont need you next week, Crayson. Better have a good time when you're young," he added sententiously. "It's the only time you do get it!"

## II

The car was big and shiny and red. The chauffeur was so French that Crayson couldn't half understand him. But then Crayson couldn't half understand anything, he was so intoxicated with the joy of playing rich. The car sped smoothly, the hours and miles slipped away like a dream. At his feet lay his smart traveling kit, all ivory fittings within and beautiful leather without. He stared down at his motor coat and gloves, he leaned back luxuriously into the fat cushions and then for sheer joy he patted the dog beside him.

That dog! He hadn't owned a dog since the brindled mongrel of his boyhood days. It was the most absurd extravagance of all, the more foolhardy when he forced himself to remember there was no place for dogs in cheap back bedrooms. And Lad—Lad was the sort of dog he had longed for all his days! He twisted the flapping ears atop the slender brown head of the beastie and laughed aloud at the dog's answering caress.

He lived more in these days than he had lived in years. He seemed suddenly let out of prison, all his picayune economies, all his weary days of figures, all his hapless hours in cheap eating places, seemed years ago.

Until yesterday he had lived alone, a man too poor to have a friend, with only the sober greetings of his fellow clerks and fellow boarders. To-day he was as ingenuous as a *débutante* aboardship for the first time. He joked with other motorists he met on the way, he lingered over luncheon tables in wayside inns with chance acquaintances, he exchanged cards with the likable chaps—with a whimsical touch of terror lest Sawyer & Elkins should sometime see one of those engraved bits—"Francis Allen Crayson, With Sawyer & Elkins" just as Elkins junior's cards read.

To his surprise he even paid his bills light heartedly now he had discarded his shabby old wallet. The new bills crackled pleasantly in a long leather case like the one Elkins junior carried. He tipped servants with the air of a man who has done it all his life; it was amazing how few errors he made. Even the critical "Henri" was proud of his master, perhaps because he was cheerfully innocent of the fact the car was rented.

The third day brought his journey to its end. All the golden afternoon they sped through Wallace county, a thousand memories tugging at the heart of the man. Crawling over the hills of old Exeter township he came suddenly upon the old Exeter burying ground and bade Henri stop. The Crayson lot was in the farthest corner, grown thick with ancient myrtle and straggling shrubbery. Even the newest stone, a fat double one, economically purchased by his mother, seemed to belong to a long-ago world. He could not feel sorry for these forgotten Craysons, their struggles had been as insignificant as his own, but he thrilled with pride when he recalled how valiantly and how cheerfully they had lived. He felt, with a sudden rush of shame, that they would none of them have stooped to a deception as puerile as that he was now practicing; and then the sound of his own choking laughter made him flee precipitately; he was thinking how his mother had punished him for his first lie.

Back again in the machine, the faster Henri drove, the deeper grew Crayson's disgust with himself; all the pretenses in the world could not hide his miserable inability; they would probably laugh in his face, those shrewd villagers. It was in this mood he reached the top of the last hill of all and stared down tragically into the town in the valley below—a toy village tucked in a bend of the shining river. Suddenly he sat up straight and his lips tightened. He saw the trails of smoke rising from the chimneys of the mill.

"Drive faster!" he ordered, sharply. "Stop at the red brick hotel on the left of that bridge."

Down through the arching elms they



sped, the children rushing to the dusty roadside, the country horses shying, ridiculously neat and dowdy little women peering from their vine-clad porches—it was all he knew it would be, only it was over too quickly. Lad leaped out first, wagging his tail and stretching his legs. Old Stanley hurried down the steps to open the tonneau door himself; the men on the wooden porch took their feet from the railing and stared.

He shook his dusty cap, he pulled off his goggles and gloves and held out his hand.

"Hello, Mr. Stanley!" he cried boyishly. "Got a place to put me and my buggy?"

Upstairs in the faded old "bridal sweet" where the girls used to put their wraps at winter dances long ago, he stared at himself in the misty mirror. His eyes were sparkling, his shoulders straight—he chuckled with glee. And then he went over and stood behind the half closed shutters and listened and laughed.

"Yep!" drawled old Stanley's voice on the porch below. "That's Deacon Crayson's boy—nicest boy ever went out of Millersville. I haint a bit surprised to see him rich. That's a leetle the biggest automobilly ever got shoved into my shed. Frenchy running it. Frank got a good room for the Frenchy, too."

"Crayson—Crayson—Crayson!" He heard it whispered all over the dingy little dining room while he ate his supper; he almost forgot he was only playing rich, so manifest was their belief in him. After supper on the creaking porch, passing his fat case of Havanas, he laughed and exchanged reminiscences with the friends of his youth. The porch seemed full of them, he had forgotten how many friends he had had in those long ago days. He accepted invitations to supper, he invited them all to ride with him, he strutted a bit in his finery with an eye on their shapeless clothes, his eyes drank in their admiration—he was a man among men again.

"I've got to move on," said Ben Butler reluctantly pulling himself out of his chair. "My wife's running the strawberry show up on the Lesters' lawn. I got to

hitch up and go after her and the girls—want to come along, Frank?"

"I'll take a bunch of you along in the car," he responded eagerly, "and bring all the girls down, if you think they'd let me in."

"Let you in!" chuckled Ben, "they'll mob you to buy the whole shooting match; us fellows were so poor we had to stay away!"

The big Lester lawn was gay with lanterns and booths and frilly dresses. The elder women kissed him, the girls he had known fluttered up with the pretty importance of young matrons and brought their starched and curly babies for him to see and shy young women who had been awkward little hoydens when he went away paid him all the adoration the handsome hero of a shattered romance could command.

He stood, flushed and happy, the center of an admiring crowd, flinging money recklessly at the shameless little saleswomen, who laughingly piled his silly purchases in his arms while the most daring one of all, a chit of a blonde, tucked a rosebud in his buttonhole. He heard a fretful voice in the bushes behind him, and as he wondered at the strangely familiar tones, he saw a plump little woman trotting fussily toward him, her elaborate silks creaking foolishly amid the others' muslins. He became aware that they were all eyeing him and staring at the plump lady. He wondered vaguely if she were the new minister's wife.

"Will you shake hands with me?" she asked nervously, her voice almost trembling at her temerity.

He stared at her a full minute, puzzled at her foolish confusion. At last it dawned upon him that this was the lady of his dreams! The absurdity of the situation struck him so grotesquely that he almost laughed aloud.

"How well you're looking!" he said with hearty inanity. "I'm awfully glad to see you!"

"It's a wonder you knew me," she said slowly. "I've changed so much more than you have, Frank."

"Oh, no," he said vaguely, staring beyond her, oblivious of the emotions that





"Hello, Mr. Stanley!" he cried, boyishly

were stirring her. "Who—who is that tall girl fixing the lantern? I can't remember her."

"That's Mary Stanton—she doesn't live here—she's visiting the Wheelers."

He was moving across the grass without knowing why.

"Let's have some lemonade," he suggested awkwardly. "She seems to be selling it."

"You and I are the only ones here who don't know each other," he stammered. "We ought to get acquainted, don't you think so?"

Mary Stanton lifted her dark eyes to him and smiled.

"Maybe Mrs. Fisher will introduce us," she said very softly. "That would be the easiest way!"

The glimmering lights in the gaudy little lanterns, the somber shadows of the fir trees, the tinkling of the mandolins in the tent beyond—all seemed as unreal as a bit of stage setting. And this woman who smiled! With her dusky hair and her great dark eyes she seemed more unreal than all the rest. As she stooped over the gleaming bowl he watched her slender hands moving delicately among the glasses. Involuntarily he glanced back at the plump, jeweled fingers of the lady beside him and shivered. Then he drew a long sigh of content.

Poor dazzler! He was no longer a cynical, unsuccessful bookkeeper, he was no longer a foolish man spending his all on a vain fancy. He only knew that somehow, in some inexplicable way, there had come into his life something so big that it swept away his terror of little things.

The days he had meant to spend starting the little town he spent at her side. Alas for poor Henri! She did not like motors! Mornings the disconsolate Frenchman yawned beneath the hotel shed, hopefully puttering about the car while his master strolled through the woods with a maid and a dog. For Mary did like Lad and he trotted at her heels as adoringly as did his owner.

Afternoons the bored Henri fumed on the hotel porch and waited longingly for the evening, while Crayson sat on the Wheelers' veranda and listened to Mary reading with Lad at her feet.

Evenings the exasperated Henri gave up in utter despair as he watched his employer wandering past under the elm trees with a slip of a woman beside him. Down to the end of the village street they walked where a tumbledown house in a forgotten garden always made them pause. And while they rested on the crumbling doorstones she made him tell her all the joyous nonsense of his boyhood, and the days that had once seemed so long ago that he could scarcely recall them, were suddenly like yesterday. Sometimes while he talked, he could almost see his mother pottering about among her straggling roses or his father nodding heavily over his paper by the unshaded lamp.

It was not alone the joyous side of the past that she enriched for him. In his years of loneliness he had not let himself remember the delight in living that had kept his father content. He had forgotten everything except the maddening drudgery of existence. But Mary had wilfully ignored the ugly side of things; if people were sad she grieved for them, if they were wicked she pitied them, but always she saw life joyously. She talked of sunsets, of woods, of children and of books. She confided her simple hopes and longings with the *naïveté* of a boastful child. The world to her was a story that always began "once upon a time" and was always going to end "happy ever after."

In that dear neglected garden with the starlight shining on her gentle loveliness, with the murmur of her voice singing like a lullaby to his tired heart, the years of stupid slavery slipped away like an ugly dream. Even when he forced himself to remember that these days could be but a brief episode he could not rouse himself from the blessed peace that possessed him. By some queer paradox the rest of life grew vague, and nothing seemed real except his love for Mary.

He was blissfully oblivious of the laughter and gossip that swept through the little village, where the neat, little, dowdy ladies of the porches chattered wisely about what they called a pretty flirtation planned to tantalize "poor Ellen Hazard."

Then, swiftly, her belief in him wrought the miracle. There came to him a superb confidence in himself that swept away all doubts of the future, he even knew that sometime he should make her love him. Unconsciously he ceased to plan for himself, he began to plan for her.

"I've got to get out of Sawyer & Elkins," he told himself bluntly. "I've got to get into something bigger. I've been a fool to hang around that job so long. I ought to find something pretty good."

He was swinging along in the morning sunshine, victory in his very stride, even though he was conscious that the end of his little comedy must come soon, when he heard Alf Saunders calling to him. He stopped impatiently, for he was on his way to ask Mary to climb Exeter hill with him.

"I say, Frank," panted Alf heavily, "what's your thundering hurry all the while? I've been trying to get hold of you for two days; I promised Kate I'd bring you home for supper some day. Besides"—he cautiously lowered his voice—"I want to talk business with you before you go back to New York; I need some advice. When can I see you?"

Crayson regarded the older man in some surprise. "Why, of course," he answered. "Anything I can do—what is it you were thinking of?"

"Well," Saunders pursued earnestly, "the fact is, boy, I've got a bit of money I want to invest in something good. I'm darned scared since the panic, to put it into anything I can't know about for sure. Us country fellows have to be careful, there's such a bunch of slick ones out gunning for us all the time. There haint much up here except the mill and the bank; and Fisher is running both of those in a way I just can't go. I sort o' feel the bottom is going to drop out some day. Do you suppose your firm could put me next to something really good? Of course what I've got wont seem much to them but it's a lot to me. It's Uncle Jim Gordon's legacy—I've got about eighteen thousand that I want to get into a safe stocking where it will make something for the kids and I sha'n't feel comfortable till it's settled." Crayson stared

ahead of him in absolute amazement.

"Investments!" He seemed to hear the elder Elkins' voice ringing in his ear: "A few good investors would put that Shoreham Manor deal back in the game if we could get into it before the twentieth—"

The twentieth! It was the nineteenth now!—"Good stuff—would make a pile for us and for the fellow who interested them."

Frank drew a long breath.

"I think I could, Alf," he said cautiously. "I know I could. I know a good straight proposition—suppose I send for the maps and papers and let you look them over."

"I certainly wish you would," announced Alf with a sigh of relief. "And I'm not the only one either; there's Alvin, Jack Forrey, Marshall—all of them more or less in my state, all afraid of Fisher. I guess we'd feel we could trust anything a Crayson put us next to." He put his hand affectionately on Frank's shoulder. "There wasn't ever any boy Millersville's been prouder of nor you," he said. "You got such a rough deal all around at your start—never asked no help nor whined about it but just lit out and made good in the hardest town on earth. Come on over in the back of my store to-morrow morning about ten—will you? I'll get the boys together and we'll talk it over."

Crayson never knew afterward just how he kept his head through it all: how he managed to remember the details of the Shoreham business; how he tried to get Elkins senior on the 'phone; how he found that member of the firm had left for northern business; how he located him at last in an Albany club. A queer thrill came to him when he heard the elder man's voice ringing over the wires.

"Great Scott, boy! Forty thousand or more! Well, that's some business! What have you been keeping books for anyhow? Get you some maps by ten to-morrow? Yes, I'll wire New York. Now wait a minute. That town of yours is off the main line, you say. I'm going through to Canada to-day—I'll get to North Junction about two this afternoon and wait there an hour for the other train. Could

you get a train that would take you down there in time to talk it over with me?"

"The morning train's gone down," answered Frank hopelessly. "The other wouldn't make it."

"Can't you get an auto and come down that way?" demanded Elkins. Crayson tried to steady his voice but it trembled joyously.

"I—I—I've got a car of my own down here, Mr. Elkins, but I forgot it," he cried. "I'll be there—I'll be there *sure* by two o'clock!"

Henri sprang ecstatically from the disconsolate depths to which he had sunk into the cushions. He polished and rubbed and oiled and cranked until Crayson was in a nervous rage. After an interminable wait, in which he might have donned his dust coat, gloves and goggles, but in which he completely forgot them, they sprang into the car and went humming smoothly along the blessedly even stretches of the "Wallace county state road." He eyed his shining watch, the watch he had bought to startle Millersville; he trembled with terror lest some over zealous constable should stop them; he lived through agonies of fright lest Henri should fail him; every turn of the road made him clutch the seat in dread of the crash that never came. The shiny car sped on and on as though it bore a charmed existence and Henri stopped it nonchalantly and neatly, in front of the North Junction Station at



She made him tell her all the joyous nonsense of his boyhood

four minutes and a half past two o'clock!

Elkins senior, just descended from his car, was waiting on the platform. All about them the shifting engines shunted and snorted, bells clanged and passengers babbled, but the older man talked in short, decisive sentences and thrust maps and papers into Crayson's hands with terse explanations.

"If you get forty thousand as you think, it will more than swing it," he said. "It will double the money for those chaps and make a pile for us beside. You can put your commissions in and make a good bit yourself too. And we'll begin developing right away. How'd you like to run it for a while? Bob will show



the details to you. It's a nice job, you'd like it, Crayson. Bob hasn't got enough stick-at-it; besides, he won't live outside town. You wouldn't mind that, would you?"

Mind it! Crayson almost sobbed!

He told Her all about it, very humbly, the last night of all. He was sitting at her feet and he did not dare look up at her. He did not spare himself; he told her how ignoble his motives had been, how foolhardy and how improvident he had been. And then after he had told her all this he said stoutly that though he knew his own unworthiness he could not be sorry for all that had happened even if she should never forgive him. Even if she despised him, he couldn't stop "being glad."

"I don't suppose you understand," he said, "but I'm going back and take my

big chance and I'm going to work so hard that I'll be somebody worth your while." He laughed unsteadily—"And then I'm coming back to you to—to dazzle you the way I meant to dazzle this town."

He paused, frightened by his own temerity. "Why, Mary," he said brokenly after a moment, "I didn't mean to tell you in this foolish way. I haven't had time to think out a good way to tell you—I didn't mean—" His voice trailed away miserably. "I don't mean anything except that I love you," he blurted helplessly.

Out of the long silence came her laughter, tremulous with tears.

"You needn't try to—to dazzle me any more," she faltered. "I'm bewildered quite enough now. Only it took you ever so long to say it. It won't take me half so long—when—when you ask me!"

## Man Proposes—And Woman Disposes

BY MRS. LUTHER HARRIS

Author of "The Room of the Cake," etc.

THE Professor's small daughter "Toinette, dark as a gypsy, with a mass of blue-black hair falling about her face, her bare throat the delicious color of a Portuguese orange, had taken the short-cut across the meadow. She was sure she would find old "Bee" Wright on the seat under the locust trees by the spring.

Old Bee Wright, as he was known to the community at large, was a weazened little old man with a face as wrinkled and brown as a frost-bitten winter pippin. He wore a faded, red cotton handkerchief in lieu of a collar, and a weather-stained felt hat, stretched out at the base by reason of tight cramming, was pulled down over his ears. He always had a hag-ridden look, and a furtive watchfulness lay in his little watery blue eyes. In summer he went bare-foot, insisting that "there was heaps of electricity

in the yarth and no way of gettin' it equal to gettin' it through the soles of the feet." His whole appearance conveyed the impression that he had soaked in and taken on the colors of the wood and wild, absorbed the pigments of Nature's paint-box.

When a honey-bee rose and spread its pollen-dusty wings and sailed away, old Bee knew to a certainty whether it were of the wild or domestic variety. Often, driven by some overruling, nomadic instinct, he would tie up a few belongings in a bundle, shoulder his stick, and steal furtively forth, usually with knees trembling lest his flitting be discovered by his irate spouse. She was an enormous woman of an ungovernable temper, whose "tantrums" were the nightmare of her meek little husband's existence. She had no visible waist-line, disdained whalebones,

and her fat ankles hung over the tops of her low prunella gaiters.

Old Bee's only excuse for these frequently recurring hegiras, which often extended over weeks, was that he had followed wild bees and was intent in luring them to the home hives. "Bees know a heap more than what most humans do," was one of his favorite axioms. "All I got against 'em is their eternal industry; it don't seem *natural-like*."

"Toinette deposited herself comfortably on the seat beside old Bee, her feet curled under her. "I was just a-hoping you'd come, honey," beamed the old man, patting her brown hand and looking down at her with an almost toothless smile. Through the bushes which lined the path leading to the cabin could be seen the huge frame of Mrs. Wright bending over a wash-tub, the steam from it so enveloping her that the upper part of her body appeared to be floating, disjointed at the waist.

"She's got it in perticularly strong for me to-day," explained old Bee confidentially, nodding over his shoulder toward the figure bending above the wash-tub. "She knows I've got a spell on me to be off on the hike, and she's got a eye on me as sharp as a eagle's. I tell you honey, them that aint got a onrestless temper'ment haven't got no kind of sympathy for them that has. You see it was like this—I fell heir to a onrestless temper'ment the same as some fellers falls heir to money. It's jest in the blood—same as havin' fits.

"One of my kin, away back, married a Romany woman—leastways he took up with her and 'twas the same thing with them as marryin', and they went strolling round the country, camping along side of the road wherever the notion took 'em. It's my idee that that's the way we *all* would have lived ff it hadn't been for Eve eating that apple and the curse of labor being pronounced on all mankind. Seems like it wasn't very just, wreakin' such a vengeance on the hull unborn human race.

"Well, I reckon I got a lot of that grandmother's blood in my veins; that's the reason I'm so onrestless, always hating a roof over my head like the devil

hates holy water. I tell you, child, when the sap's coming up in the trees along toward Spring it just seems like something stirs in me here."

He put a wrinkled hand over the bosom of his old brown shirt. 'Toinette nodded understandingly. That was the wonderful thing about 'Toinette, she always seemed to understand. Presently he drew out a stubby briar pipe, handling it reverently, poking the tobacco down with a very crooked finger and smiling to himself.

"They say every Injun has what they call his 'fetish,'" he grinned, "and I reckon this old pipe is mine. I wouldn't part with it for all the gold of Golkondie. You see I've got a secret idee about this pipe," he chuckled softly. "My idee is that it has took up and soaked in all the sweet smells of all the flower-strewn woods and lanes that I've smoked it in. And it aint imagination neither—don't tell *me*. Sometimes I get a whiff of pennyroyal and spearmint and sweet clover and meadow-sweet—and I tell you it *aint in the terbaccer*."

His old face lighted up with the thought and he gave a Solon-like nod as of one whose wisdom is conclusive. "No, it aint in the terbaccer. It's my belief that it's the *speerit* of all them sweet-smellin' woods I've smoked that pipe in. It's just soaked 'em all in and it *tastes*."

He threw a swift glance over his shoulder before he lighted his pipe with long inhalations. "I guess she aint through rinsing them out yet. She says I got to empty the tubs when she is." He crossed his bony knees and his pipe purred contentedly. Then he fell into his usual crooning monologue:

"My belief is that there's too much civilization these days, anyway, and it aint good for mortals. Now you take these city folks, for instance, that aint ever walked on anything but sidewalks and what they call asphalt—they don't know nothing about the feel of new grass curling up over your toes." (The old man looked down beamingly at his bare feet.) "They don't know what kind of a thrill goes through a body when he feels it crunching under the soles of his feet. They don't have any of those stir-

rings inside of 'em when the Spring comes stealing through the meaders and creeping along the lanes and smelling in the breeze. No, they don't have any more stirrings inside of 'em than what a brass monkey on a stick has!"— He gave one of his deep-throated chuckles and smiled down at 'Toinette from a mouth very much sagged at one corner by reason of the constant pressure of a pipe stem.

"Now it's the same with edgercation. I don't say but what a little edgercation is all right—readin' and writin' and 'rithmetic. But gosh! Why, I've seen fellers—there's Mayor Overton's son, for instance, that's been away to college for a year or two back—why, that feller's so over-edgercated he's jest for all the world like a gum tree that's plumb covered with warts. And anybody knows a gum tree with warts is *doomed*."

'Toinette was looking up the weed-bordered path. "She's hanging up the socks," she warned gently. "She has a clothes-pin in her mouth but I *think* she's calling you." The old man gave a quick jump and glanced over his shoulder. "She aint rolled down her sleeves yet," he commented, settling back with an air of contentment while his pipe purred sleepily. "I don't see as there's any harm done if those tubs *do* set a spell." Then he took up his Jeremiad again: "It's my idee that human beings need a turrible lot of oxygen floating around their insides the same as an engine needs steam. And a man's got to have a change o' climate occasionally to keep his liver workin' right. Though Lucrezia allows that if my liver worked very lively it would be clean out of plumb with the rest of me."

Lucrezia was at that moment glaring at the two and must have heard his cackle of dry laughter. "I teil you, honey, it's a awful inheritance—a onrestless temperment—when you're yoked up to a woman cursed with a frightful industry and who works her tongue overtime—the same like she does the rest of her."

"I know," said 'Toinette, her elbows on her knees, her woodland eyes deepening in blackness. "Sometimes over there in the pasture when I lie on my

back in the grass and look up at the sky—it's like that with me. I want to be free—*free*!" She spread out her arms with a vivid gesture. "Only like that can I be happy. To be free—like the wind and the sea!"

For awhile this strangely assorted two, allied in spirit, sat in a comprehensive silence. Then old Bee made confidence:

"The truth is, honey child, that I don't dare let go of this here bench very long. I've got such a spell on me to be off on the tramp. Shanks mares are just a champing at the bit and a shaking their manes to be off on the go. You see this is the time of year when the bees are more sassy than usual. They come a-fly-ing up to a fellow, buzzing in his ear: 'Fraid to follow me! 'Fraid of your wife—eh?'"

"Well," laughed 'Toinette, her eyes dancing, "why do you take a dare like that, Uncle Bee? Why don't you go?"

He lifted a warning finger. "Shu-u-u! She's got ears like a weasel. Don't let on but what we are talking about religious topics. The truth is that I've got a handkercher with some things tied up in it right this very minute under this bench. And I'm just a-waiting till sundown—Don't look like I'm telling you anything secret—And look at this here." He displayed with great pride a newly cut walking-stick. "Second growth hickory and no more bend to it than to a steel rod." Then he drew from under the bench a parcel wrapped in a soiled newspaper. "These here are for going through thickets where there's likely to be pizen snakes." The treasures revealed were a pair of leather soles, having straps attached like sandals. "And this here is for snake bites, in case I might get one." A full flask protruded from his hip pocket. "It's been my experience and observation that prayer aint in it with a good swig of 'Old Tom' or 'Kentucky Favorite' if a rattler or a copperhead happens to stick you. And a man ought to be fortified against such things. What's she doin', 'Toinette?"

"She's fanning herself and rocking on the porch. Hadn't we better go, Uncle Bee? She looks terribly—what father would call 'unpropitious.' Don't you

think she's going to have a tantrum?"

"Not till she gits cooled off." He leaned forward on his stick and his concave appearance seemed to accent itself till he appeared to fold up like a collapsible cup or an opera hat. "A funny thing happened the other day when I was a-setting here. A man come along—he was one of those kind of fellows that are always studying the rocks and things trying to find out how old the world it—just as if it mattered! He was a long, lank kind of a chap, sort of narrower in the beam, and he set here talking quite a spell. Somehow I got to telling him about the onrestless feelin' inside of me that never lets me stay put, and all to once he looks at me and says he:

"'You poor devil; have *you* got it, too?"

"'Got what?' says I.

"'Why, that's the *wanderlust*,' says he.

"'Well,' says I, 'I'm glad to know what 'tis. Lucrezia has always allowed that it was just plain tarnal shiftlessness mixed up with what the Bible calls bein' possessed of the devil.' 'There's no cure for it,' says he, and he walked away."

Apparently the old man had fallen into a reverie, quite forgetful of the thunder cloud hanging so close upon the horizon, for he came out of the dream presently to say—"It's funny what pretty thoughts will come to a man when he just sets and watches the bees." A swarm of them were hovering over a field of blossoming buckwheat near by. "It's a sort of a fool idee of mine that the flowers feel sort of flattered and set up over having the bees come and sip the honey out of their cups." He looked up at Toinette with the thought reflected in his watery blue eyes. "I've noticed that there's a heap of flowers that the bees pass right over and pay no attention to. And I've kind of got it into my head that the ones they sip honey from always hold up their heads in a proud-like kind of a way—just like they'd been kissed."

Toinette glanced up with glowing eyes. "Why, Uncle Bee—you're a *poet*!" she exclaimed rapturously.

The old man glanced up the path with a more than ordinarily frightened

look. "Shu-u-u-u!" he warned in a sibilant whisper. "For the land's sake don't let Lucrezia hear you say that! She's called me everything on the face of the yarth she can lay her tongue to—but *that*."

It was late that evening, some time after sundown, when Toinette returned to old Bee's cabin, intent on the errand which she had quite forgotten in the morning. "Father sent me for some honey," she explained, standing in the doorway, her nimbus of black hair framing her face.

A huge feather tick was in the middle of the floor and seated upon it was Lucrezia, winding and sewing carpet-rags, ball after ball. "I can't get up," she answered serenely. "You open the door to that cupboard and get out them three boxes of honey—they're for your pa. Tell him they are just fresh from the hive. You better take one of them covered dishes to carry it home in; I suppose you'll jump fences with it in your hand—I've *see* you do it. I can't get up. Just help yourself."

She had a calm-after-the-storm expression that set Toinette wondering. Had Uncle Bee made his escape safely, and was he now tramping off among the still, purple reaches of the hills over there? She selected a dish, and before she passed out of the room paused a moment in the doorway. "Where is Uncle Bee?" she asked casually.

There was a slight, a very slight, stirring beneath the feather tick. "Here I be," said a faint voice, and the toes of one bare foot were visible. "Here—I—be."

"I reckon I've got him where he wont go hiking again for a spell," explained Lucrezia, shifting her position slightly so that her two hundred and fifty pounds sustained a more even balance. "I reckon I'll squash some of that 'onrestless temperment' out o' him for a spell."

She took up another ball of carpet-rags and began winding it placidly, with the poised calm of one who knows her duty, and takes an unmitigated joy in doing it.





"But—but what made you, Jack?" she queried for the hundredth time

## His Liege Lady

BY EMERSON TAYLOR

Author of "The Home Port," etc.

AS THE new Mrs. Allardyce came along the broad piazza to greet her caller, a little shyly, with a smile that, asked for friendship, you would have decided offhand that she was as good as she was beautiful, and that Allardyce was fortunate indeed. You would have run to meet her, had you been under twelve; you would have longed to do so, had you been more than that. For her white dress was of the Rue de la Paix, her color radiant, her figure and carriage suggestive by their supple grace of a possible stage training, her dark eyes shadowy and serious. But for some reason the fat, black-silked woman in the brown wicker chair erected herself at Mrs. Allardyce's approach like a rampart.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Benson!" The cool, sunny voice was perfect too.

"So glad to have found you in. H'm! Lovely here on the piazza, isn't it?" And then, after a little pause, "How much you must enjoy it all," observed Mrs. Benson weightily.

Another little pause. Just a hint of lightning kindled in the bride's eyes. She looked the other woman up and down in a flash, then her brows lifted a trifle, in the quaintest, most humorous fashion possible, and she turned her regard down the valley with its warm, changing pattern of gray and purple and blue.

"The country is beautiful," she responded evenly.

"Well, we all think so—people who've

lived in Carrington always," returned the caller. "But I dare say we're prejudiced. Awful hard to get used to the idea of anything new 'n' different's being quite so good as the places and people we're used to 'n' love, isn't it? ("And now," she whispered to herself contentedly, "I guess I've put this young sprig that's snapped up John Allardyce before his poor wife's been dead two years *about* where she *belongs*. She knows how *we* feel.") And Mrs. Benson lowered herself again into the deep chair, smiling serenely.

"Yes," the bride assented. "It's a safe rule, I suppose, for most people. It's certainly a popular rule."

"Keeps you on the safe side," continued Mrs. Benson.

"Makes you wonder what life is like on the unsafe side," murmured the hostess. A remark which gave her caller a most uncomfortable sense of defeat right on the heels of what was plainly a triumphant and immediate victory, since what the new Mrs. Allardyce could possibly mean, the good Mrs. Benson could not possibly determine. And if you remember that on this warm afternoon Mrs. Allardyce seemed as exquisitely cool and delicately fragrant as a spray of apple blossoms, while her caller was suffering in a notable but tight "best black," you will agree that the former deserved no mercy.

"I've come on a queer sort of errand," announced Mrs. Benson, moving to the attack.

"What can I do for you?" asked the bride, with her most engaging smile.

"Oh, it isn't any favor, Mrs. Allardyce!" She winced under the deftly delivered flank movement. "But I did want to *see* you."

"Kind in you."

"And of course I was coming right off—I wanted to, naturally—to call form'y on the new bride." She stopped, swallowed hard. How very annoying it is when something keeps you from saying things just the way you want to! "I thought I'd ought to—I've got to—speak to you about that son of Mr. Allardyce," she concluded emphatically, in a rush, out of breath.

"Boy—?" The other's face lighted up with love and amusement both.

"I don't know's you've any authority over him—"

"Authority?" murmured the step-mother.

"Or ought I to see his father about him?"

She recovered herself instantly. "I think you may tell me, Mrs. Benson. What about Jack?"

"Fighting!"

"What—?"

"Oh, you heard me!" insisted the caller, fluttering her eyelids.

"Distinctly," agreed the bride. "That's just the trouble. Who with?" she asked hesitatingly.

"My Jamie. That's who, Mrs. Allardyce. And using dreadful language, too. Where he learns it, I don't know. I used to think Jack was a nice boy, but only yesterday, right after school, he called my Jamie—the purest minded, sweetest child—he called him a—" And she whispered, with scared, greedy eyes. "Think of it! And he only nine years old. I really must complain."

"I—I hope your Jamie wasn't hurt any, Mrs. Benson." Oh, that wonderful voice, with its elusive, half-felt, changeful tones! Was she in earnest—or (dreadful thought!) was she laughing? The other woman trembled, she was so angry—so thoroughly and beautifully angry.

"All I know is that my child came home yesterday afternoon crying, with his clothes in rags, Mrs. Allardyce. Cut on the cheek too, and covered with blood. Covered! And dirty. And he was bruised where your—Mr. Allardyce's great boy kicked him. And—"

"Kicked him?"

"Well, Jamie said so. And two front teeth—in *ruins*!"

"Was—was Jamie quite sure?" She had gone a little white.

"I said—he told me so, Mrs. Allardyce," said the injured mother magnificently. "And *my* boy is incapable of falsehood."

"How nice!" A tiny pause. "How old is—Jamie?" inquired Mrs. Allardyce, leaning back in her chair again.

"Eleven."

"Oh!" she whispered, smiling very indecorously at some sudden, whimsical thought. "I see."

"Well, I'm glad if you do see!" the visitor rapped out, breathing very hard. "And before I go, I wish to make sure that it won't happen again. I don't consider it at all too much to ask that it shall be safe for my Jamie to go and come from school. I don't care how rich Mr. Allardyce is—my husband's just a plain store-keeper, but we've lived in Carrington always 'n' we've got just as many rights as anybody—and ideas, too. And that boy of yours ought to know that gentlemen don't fight. No, nor curse-'n'-swear neither!"

"Thank you," said Mrs. Allardyce gratefully, frankly. "You make my duty so very plain."

"Well, I'm glad if I do. I always believe in speakin' right out—I often say to my husband that—well, I declare, there's that boy now!" she exclaimed warningly. "Now please you talk to him." And she sat back waiting.

A slim, straight figure, already wide in the shoulder, though still a bit uncertain and lamb-like about the legs, came round the corner of the house on the gallop.

"Boy—I!" called Mrs. Allardyce softly.

"Yes?" The tone was impatient, almost curt. But the second his eyes lighted on the visitor, a new look came into his glowing face—that of a man ready in a sudden, desperate emergency to defend an apparently lost cause. "Yes," mother—"?" inquired Jack in a voice of honey.

"I want to see you just a minute." He came up to the edge of the piazza, very

serious and watchful, not looking at the visitor at all. "Mrs. Benson, Jack." And then he bowed, dancing-school fashion, while the caller closed her eyes.

"What is it you wanted, mother?" he asked after a moment's silence.

She hesitated; lowered her beautiful eyes. A faint added color crept into her cheeks.

"Never mind, boy. I—I'll see you later, dear. Run along."

"All right." He started off; stopped; returned. "Good afternoon, Mrs. Benson," said Jack punctiliously.

The caller sprang to her feet as he disappeared. "I see I'll have to have Mr. Benson speak to your husband," she snorted, halting at the top of the steps. "Oh, I quite understand. He's not your own son; you're the second wife; you aint been married only a short time—and you don't dare! I see. Good day, Mrs. Allardyce!"

"Bing!" cried the new bride, gesturing impolitely after the majestic

figure as it moved off down through the rhododendrons. "But—it's true!" she whispered with serious, anxious eyes. "I don't dare. I haven't won him yet. I'm only a usurper to Jack—just as I am to that thing. Till Jack accepts me, I haven't any right to be here."

The old compunction, the old wearing thought, which had shadowed her from the very beginning, ever since Stephen Allardyce, the widower of a year, had asked her to take the other One's place. At first she had shaken her head, just because he was very rich and she was poor. Again she declined him, because she could not help feeling that if she let him love her and returned his love, she would be playing false to the girl whose brides-



"Oh, I see!"

maid she had been. But later she had come to understand that a man may remember certain years of his life as one remembers a beautiful or moving story, or the experiences of a wonderful journey, and yet desire blamelessly to read another book, or to follow another road. And he made her understand, too, that the ancient code by which a man may reward a girl for the gift of herself not only with his love but with all the best he has of position and power, was one by which the girl may live honorably still. But, the question—

"If only I could be sure of Jack!" she had sighed doubtfully, her beautiful face very serious. "Do you think that he will—accept me?"

"Of course! Not but what—"

"He loved his mother so beautifully," she exclaimed, covering his quick confusion. "And that is why—oh, he must not think for one moment that I'm an intruder, or that his father's a traitor in any way," she went on swiftly.

A sudden, passionate earnestness was forever flaming up in her thought and speech only to subside as quickly. She had never learned the useful arts either of feeling lightly or of speaking casually. Those whom she did not disconcert, loved her. "Can you be sure of that, Stephen? Sure—"

"Do you believe," he countered, "that the boy can spend an hour with you without loving you?"

"I would try to win him harder than any man I ever knew," she replied. "For my own sake, you see," she added whimsically.

"And for mine!" said the man, straight from his lonely heart.

"And I *will* try;" she said quickly.

She had lived in a small flat with a deaf and querulous old aunt; now her house at the top of the hill was one which architects asked permission to visit. She had always been alone; now she was surrounded with all the happiness which is the lot of those who mate with the silent and the strong. A dependent, now she ruled. Pitied, now her friends wrote hoping for invitations. Oh, yes, a great change! And she was happy? Oh, very! She said so to every one, with a frankness which made them laugh and love her all the better. But al-

ways, deep down in her heart, was a secret little sorrow, a misgiving, a twinge of fear. Not that she had any reason, of course. For he was quaintly polite, was Boy, always, from the beginning. He was almost pathetically scrupulous about doing his new mother all the honors of the new house. He remembered always to include her; once or twice, at twilight time, he shared with her some small confidence.

They compared views; they had a secret from father; they conspired at Christmas time. All that—and yet she could not believe Boy loved her. She felt that he accepted her as inevitable, like a change in the weather, or because he ought to. And then—*was* it only her fancy?—sometimes, whenever she and Boy were together, she was sure that The Other was present too. She had a friendly, loyal smile for the new Mrs. Allardyce, to be sure; they were friends now just as they were before she died; she was happy that her husband had found happiness again. All this the new bride felt she had been told—with a little gesture of benediction. But—one senses these things, you know, somehow—there were



"I'm glad if you do see"



tears in her gentle eyes when they rested on her little boy, all alone now; it was as though, once or twice, she quickly interposed her arm between him and the new mother, who was after all only a stranger, and drew her youngling back into the shelter of her own warm breast. Time and again, as Mrs. Allardyce sat with Jack before a dying fire or before the western sky after sunset, she felt—rightly?—that the boy's eyes were full of sorrow and of longing. *Was* he forever listening for the sound of the voice that was still? But perhaps boys of that age never show much affection anyhow, she said to herself, trying to find comfort.

"I want him to love me for myself," she said again and again to her husband.

"He's a queer little tyke," replied Allardyce lightly, drawing her close to him. "I can't always tell what he's thinking about, myself."

And so matters stood between the three of them on the day when Mrs. Benson paid her memorable call.

Troublesome, this matter which her impossible neighbor had called to her attention! Her duty was plain enough. She did not like the idea at all that Jack used bad language and—fought. It seemed unreal somehow. She supposed vaguely that boys fought only in stories of school life, or—well, in the tenements. And swearing was tolerable only when it was picturesque—on the lips of heroes. For Jack to swear was merely unworthy. And the Benson had dared her. And furthermore it was high time she showed the boy that love means care as well as worship. Besides—oh, there were fifty reasons, all good ones, for taking him to task. When she went up to his room at bed time, to sit by his side a moment, after the comfortable custom which had grown up between them, she had her little speech all ready.

How would he take it? What if there came into his face that look of hot mutiny, as if against her usurped authority, which she had seen once before? They had a long talk about the chances of the lower forms at school to develop any sort of a nine that spring, now that Lawrence Barry, the only pitcher who could deliver a spit ball, had left. Prayers followed,

then a brief rehearsal of what Jack must have ready for Sunday school the day after the morrow. Carefully he recited the beatitudes, watching meanwhile the picture of King Arthur (the Innsbruck statue in mail), which hung on the opposite side of the room.

"I suppose I ought to pray for Jamie Benson," said the boy reflectively and aggressively, the light of battle smoldering in his eyes.

"Pray for Jamie?" she echoed blankly, for until then his labored petitions had included only the family.

"That's what the Bible says," he insisted. "I just recited it. 'Pray for them that despitefully use you 'n' persecute you.'"

"Does Jamie—persecute?" she asked.

"No-o. He kind o' 'spitefully uses though. Or he tried to," Jack amended, smiling up at the ceiling with a comfortable air of victory.

"It's very wrong to fight, dear," she began fearfully.

"Not always it aint."

"Why?"

"He said things," hinted the boy darkly.

"About you?"

"About somebody I liked," said Jack after a long pause, turning his face away.

His father talked to him also about Mrs. Benson's complaint, pulling vigorously at his pipe the while. As Boy described the battle, Allardyce did not look at him at all. He watched with an attention almost painful, the slow winging of a crow over the hemlock growth far down the valley, then looked up at the sailing cloud squadrons on their voyage to the East. Now and then his eyes twinkled traitorously.

"So you licked him!" he commented at length, fingering a dollar in his waistcoat pocket.

"Yes, sir!"

"Good and proper?"

"Yes, sir! He tried to kick me. But I backheeled him, 'n' I soaked him as he went over. It wasn't a reg'lar *fight*," Jack explained a bit anxiously, as his father's face darkened a trifle. "If he'd stood up to me, I wouldn't have tripped him, honestly, father."



His father talked to him about Mrs. Benson's complaint, puffing at his pipe the while

"Who began it?" asked father, after a long pause.

"He did."

"Sure?" He glanced over at the boy with the look the youngster understood, and had never yet feared to meet.

"Yes, sir."

"All right. Call you names, did he?"

"Not me, he didn't." He stopped, flushing to the line of his black, rebellious hair. "Somebody else, father."

"The only thing, boy," he said at length, "is that your fighting worries mother."

"But—"

"Just a minute! We want to be very careful about *that*, you know. We want always to remember that mother is very dear and very precious, that she has come to us—no, has been sent to us, Jack, to make us happy once more, old man. And so—"

"Yes, sir!" Another little pause—tense, a bit perilous, the father felt, for just a second. Then the boy looked over at his senior with that air of quiet understanding you will catch sometimes as it flashes from one seasoned man to another. "You mean," he added quietly, "that it's up to us to make mother feel at home?"

"Exactly," said Allardyce casually.

Miss Hackett's class of boys at St. Andrew's Sunday school behaved astonishingly well on a certain Sabbath morning. The whole dozen listened to her description of the scene of the Sermon on the Mount with rapt attention. They stole only the most furtive of glances at one another; and Miss Hackett loved them more dearly than ever—they looked so sweet with their wide, white collars and sleek hair. They didn't whisper or fidget or make rabbits out of their handkerchiefs; they answered her coaxing questions just as well as they knew how. Such perfect boys! She was sure that her stories of Chinese Gordon had made an impression. There was only one little incident that interrupted the pleasant hour, and that was more odd than troublesome. She had asked young Allardyce why our Lord had blessed the meek, promising them the inheritance of the earth.

"I don't know, Miss Hackett," he replied.

"Jamie Benson?" And the teacher's beaming blue eyes rested on the stout youth who, for some reason the teacher did not stop to consider, had changed his seat that morning to one at the extreme opposite end of the row from the little Allardyce boy. "Can you tell us?"

Jamie smiled proudly. "Yes'm," he chirped. "He—" But he stopped short. Miss Hackett saw him look at Jack in disdainful triumph; then she fancied she caught the latter's eye fixed on Jamie with an expression like that of a Sicilian bandit. A faint but perceptible sigh stirred up and down the class, though not a man of them moved. "I've forgot," said Jamie weakly, biting his lip.

"Ah—h'm!" came from Jack in a contented sigh. He was studying critically a jagged scratch on the back of his hand.

"But you *said* you knew!" protested Miss Hackett, although a seasoned school teacher would have steered away from the danger instantly.

"Well, I didn't—really," Jamie rapidly assured her. "I—I didn't."

"Oh, you 'fraid-cat!" whispered the boy next to him, as Miss Hackett looked away. "Oh, you ba-bee!"

"I aint!"

"You're scared of him!"

"Boys, boys, boys!" pleaded the teacher. And with that the incident passed. Five minutes later the school was singing "Onward Christian Soldiers."

Five minutes more, and something had attracted every boy in the whole of St. Andrews to a secluded patch of lawn behind the church, which was partly screened from the street by a group of well grown hemlocks. The school eddied and clustered round Jamie Benson and Jack Allardyce, who were moving round and round each other, the one very red, the other chalky white.

"Take that back!" a late comer heard Jack demand tensely.

"Well, my mother said so."

"Then she lied," said the boy, very low and steady, straight into the other's fat face. "And you lie."

"Prove it!"

Crack! A tough, hard, gritty little fist

went home like lightning on a cheekbone, and the crowd widened out instantly.

With a roar the Benson plunged in and bore Jack backward in his rush. The latter caught two good ones—in the neck and on his forehead. He smashed back, locking in the dry sobs which rose chokingly in his dry throat; he saw blood; he struck to kill that bloody Thing—that Thing which was so much bigger, and so hateful. He dived at It blindly, digging his fingers into the soft places between the ribs, tempted to bite. He twined himself about the Thing, breathless, passionate; he must get It under foot, stamp his heel into It's face. The Thing was roaring, hammering on his back and head. He was being hurt, but he hung on—for years, silently. He was down; he was up again in a second, fighting like a wild-cat—there were hundreds of thousands of faces all round him. Voices were calling; there was a movement—something like a retreat among the crowd. Father was there. Mother was there—in a lilac colored dress and white gloves, descended from somewhere. The Thing's hands were down for a second; he caught him full on the chin; he drove the Thing to earth and sent after him the worst insult he had ever heard the chauffeur apply to

a refractory carburetor—something beyond comprehension but unquestionably wicked. He—

"Hold up!" A mighty hand was laid on his shoulder; an arm swept under his chin; he was picked right up off his feet, though he fought good and hard still, blindly—He was lying back in the tonneau of the motor car, gasping for breath between the sobs which *would* come! Mother was there. She was asking some anxious questions of father, who was looking straight ahead.

"But—but what *made* you, Jack?" she queried for the hundredth time.

"H-he did!" came the broken, sobbing reply. He sat up straight again, pushing back the hair which had straggled over his forehead. "He—he said you—he said his mother said you"—sob—"you only married f-father so's—so's—to get a home and you"—sob—"just pretended to l-love me 'cause you"—sob—"had to. 'N' so I—I told him he lied and punched him in his damn nose, by gosh. For I—I aint going to have *him* say things about you, nor"—sob—"anybody!"

"Well—?" asked father. But she did not answer. She only bowed her head, and tremulously kissed the gladiator on his gory forehead.

## Fiddler's Pay

BY JOHN BARTON OXFORD

Author of "Miss Anybody," etc.

WITH a pleased smile upon his weather-beaten features, very much like that of a child who is thoroughly engrossed in some new and wholly delectable toy, Captain Heman Snow opened the door of the "spare room" closet and gazed with something approximating adoration in his eyes at the unwieldy bulk of the bass viol leaning against a line of camphor-smelling garments.

It was not an amazingly beautiful instrument, even as bass viols go. Its finger-board was sadly warped; its bridge was askew; its heavy strings, badly frayed, gave evidence of snapping inopportunistically

at some moment of tuning up. A good half of the scroll work on its neck was gone, and one of the "*f*"-holes looked as if some previous player had taken a dive through it.

But to Captain Heman's eyes it was a thing of beauty and a joy forever. It represented to him ambition at last realized; a long standing hope finally come to its complete fruition.

From the opposite corner of the closet he drew out and set up in the middle of the "spare room's" straw carpet a wobbly old music rack, and upon this he placed a book of "Exercises for the Double Bass,"



yellow with age. Then, with a reverent touch, he lifted out the bass viol itself, adjusted his steel-bowed spectacles firmly on his nose, unhooked the ponderous bow from the neck of his beloved instrument, and proceeded to saw it clumsily across a hunk of resin the size of a small boulder.

Immediately after which, bedlam broke loose in the sacred precincts of Mrs. Snow's best upstairs room. According to the exercise book, Captain Heman was giving a rendition of "In the Depths Below;" and, since the exercise book stated this important fact so baldly and unequivocally, the retired mariner was possessed of a blissful belief that such was the case. But to the unprejudiced ear the groans and booms and wails which emanated from the tortured instrument, were much more like the death-plaints of a stricken hippopotamus, departing this life in frightful agony.

In the little front parlor below stairs, old Mrs. Webb, who had just dropped in for a neighborly call on the captain's better half, started violently in her chair, and although she herself admitted that her hearing was somewhat defective—which meant much for a woman of her personal pride—she clapped a hand over the ear that still retained some vestige of its usefulness, and gazed at her hostess with unmistakable alarm.

"Elviry, for goodness' sake what was that?" she inquired.

"I guess it's the Cap'n," Mrs. Snow bellowed, to make herself heard.

"The Cap'n!" repeated the bewildered Mrs. Webb. "Land o' love, child, what ails him?"

Mrs. Snow indulged in a patient smile. There had been much need of patient smiles in her life with the rather pig-headed captain. Long practice had given her perfection in the art of them.

"Nothin's the matter with him," said Mrs. Snow. "I guess he's playin' his fiddle."

"I never heard no fiddle that sounded like that before," Mrs. Webb declared, not without hinted suspicion.

"It's a bull-fiddle—one of them gr'et, big ones," Mrs. Snow explained. "That's his latest notion. Come a-tuggin' it home the other night. Said he'd always han-

kered to play the bull-fiddle ever since he was a boy, and now that he was doin' so well, since him and Captain Hall bought the *Luella* and run her up and down the coast to Riverport and Deep Harbor, he was just a-goin' to indulge his ambition and learn to play it. You know Captain Hall runs the schooner and Heman don't have nothin' to do but jest what he pleases and take half the profits."

She paused, leaned confidentially towards her caller and sighed.

"I've put up with a sight of his notions since I married him, but I believe this is the wust of 'em all," she confessed.

"I should think likely it might be," said her caller grimly, as the walls fairly vibrated beneath the captain's efforts.

"But one thing that's got to be understood, and he might as well know it fust as last," said Mrs. Snow, getting out of her chair with a light of determination in her usually placid eyes. "He aint agoin' to whang away on that pesky thing when there's company in the house. Excuse me for a minute. We can't hear ourselves think in this hubbub. I'll stop him, temporary at least."

"In the Depths Below" was drawing to the unhappy close of its last few bars, and the window panes were fairly rattling in their sashes, when Mrs. Snow, her hands clapped tightly over her ears, opened the door upon the riot of discords.

"Heman! Heman!" she shouted, her shrill voice finally piercing the din.

Reluctantly the captain paused, and faced her with the bow still suspended over the strings, evidently intent on resuming the unequal combat at the first opportunity.

"Well? What is it now?" he snapped with all the irritation of the interrupted artist.

"We got company. There's a caller downstairs."

"Have, hey? What of it?"

"You're makin' so much racket we can't hear ourselves think."

"Racket!" he growled angrily, but before he could proceed with whatever tart remarks he was about to voice, his wife was talking again.

"You've jest got to stop that playin'—"

if that's what you call it—when there's company here. I wont have it. I jest wont—you understand? There's times for all things, but it aint no time for practicin' on that bull-fiddle when there's callers downstairs."

"I s'pose—" he began acridly.

"Never mind what you s'pose," she interrupted. "If you've got to play that thing this afternoon, you take it somewhere else."

She shut the door again with an air of finality.

Captain Heman grunted his disgust. Then wrathfully he gathered up the bass viol, the music rack, and the exercise book and went banging down the stairs.

Across the yard he clumped, to come to rest finally in the little barn, where with the music rack set up on the uneven floor, the interrupted rendition of "In the Depths Below" was resumed, rather more violently, if possible, than before.

Mrs. Snow, glancing through the parlor window, saw her husband cross the yard and disappear within the ample doors. And when forthwith the din arose again, she once more quitted her rocker.

"Oh, land o' Goshen!" she murmured. "You'll have to excuse me for a minute again," she added in a louder tone to Mrs. Webb, who had just begun relating a choice bit of neighborhood gossip.

Out to the barn spun Mrs. Snow, and accosted her spouse with the light of battle in her eyes.

"Heman Snow," she cried, "what in the name of conscience are you thinkin' of, bringin' that thing out here?"

"Well," said he, "you drove me out of the house. What's the matter now? What's the matter with my doin' my practicin' out here in the barn? Jest what are your objections to it?" he ended with choice irony.

"You don't seem to think of nothin' lately but that old fiddle of yourn," she complained. "You can't play it in here. I've got three hens settin' up on the mow. You'll drive 'em off their nests with your racket. Not that I blame 'em for not stayin'," she finished meaningly.

The distraught captain seized the opportunity to once more resin his bow with the small boulder.

"Well, if this don't beat time!" he burst out hotly. "Callers in the house and hens a-settin' in the barn! Where do you think I'm ever goin' to practice?"

At this Mrs. Snow's overwrought temper slipped beyond her control.

"I don't see's there's any need of your practicin'," she observed crossly. "Of all your foolishness, this is jest about the climax. The idea of a man of your age and standin' in the community a-wastin' your time on sech a fool thing as that!"

"Wastin' my time!" he repeated scornfully. "Say, jest look a-here, Elviry, even supposin' I didn't git my money's wuth outer it in the pleasure I take learnin' to play it, I aint a-wastin' my time. Sam Holt says if I'll learn to play it, he'll take me into his orchestra, and they gits two dollars a man ev'ry time they plays at dances. I guess that's pretty good money for an evenin's work."

"A-puttin' in a lot o' time for the sake of earning' two dollars now and then, supposin' you ever *do* learn to play it, and that two dollars comin' unfrequent and uncertain, is good business, aint it?" she sniffed.

The captain's wrath flared forth unrestrained.

"I'm goin' to learn to play it if it takes a leg, or both of 'em, for that matter," he proclaimed stoutly. "And if I'm goin' to learn I've got to practice, haint I? I suppose you think it aint nothin' but fun—"

"Not for them as has to listen to you, at any rate," was her tart interruption. "But you got to keep out of the barn till after them hens has hatched, at least. I'd give a good sight more for what them chickens'll be wuth than for all you'll ever earn with that thing."

Captain Snow snatched up the music rack so violently that one of its decrepit legs fell out.

"Oh, yes! Keep on a-hectorin' a man that's tryin' to do somethin', wont ye? You and your callers and your settin' hens! Mighty thunder! Where in time do you expect I'm goin' to play, if I can't on my own property?"

"I dunno, and what's more I don't care," snapped his wife as she turned towards the house. "But there's one thing I'll tell you right now: when a man of

your age takes to sech foolishness, no good ever comes of it. You'll remember that sometime."

With bitterness in his heart, Captain Snow bethought him of a pine grove, just across the fields back of his own house. Thither he went, but scarcely had he opened up operations in this latest stand when a hand was laid on his shoulder.

Turning about, he saw Freeman Grey, the owner of the grove, standing beside him.

"Now, mark ye, Heem," Gray was saying, "I don't want to seem unneighborly, and I don't order ye off'n my land. I don't *order* ye, mind; but I do *serggest* that you does your playin' somewhere else. This here grove is right close to my pasture, and your playin' gits the cows to runnin', and runnin' cows is bad. The milk gets all het and spiles."

Captain Heman, with muttered and shame-faced apologies, betook himself from the grove. But in the road beyond he paused and shook a clenched fist at the sky.

"Seems like they was all ag'in me," he croaked. "But spite of the whole kerboodle, I'll practice this afternoon. Yep. I've sut out to learn to play this fiddle, and I'll learn it. There's one place left. I can take the sloop and go out a ways. Hadn't outer be very rough outside. Yep. Let's see 'em try to stop me there."

Ten minutes later Captain Snow, his paraphernalia stowed away in the tiny cabin, was casting off the moorings of the sloop.

"Wont no good come of it, Elviry says," he mused. "Well, I'll show her."

A thickening fog was rising from the sea, as the little sloop went skimming out of the harbor.

"I'll see that I don't disturb no one this trip," the captain told himself, as he headed for Round Shoal buoy.

On the western edge of Round Shoal, close to the big can-buoy, which rose and sank lazily on the long ground swell, Captain Snow dropped anchor. The fog was growing thicker. It veiled the sea, a well nigh impenetrable blanket of grayish-white.

With the sail in its stops and the sheets neatly coiled, the captain sought the lit-

tle cabin, not without a certain ironic smile curving his thin lips.

"I guess there wont be none of them tender ears to suffer out here," he chuckled, as he spread the exercise book.

But before he gave his undivided attention to the task before him, he thrust his head out of the companionway for a final look at the weather.

"Hall'd oughter to be somewheres about with the *Luella*," he mused, "head-in' for Deep Harbor with that load of grain. What wind there is, is fair for him. He's makin' good trips this season. Lucky him and me bought her. If he don't meet with no trouble, she'd oughter be a reg'lar gold mine for us this year, what with freights as they are."

Then, with a last look at the rapidly thickening mist, he retired to the cabin and the orgy began.

What with the captain's own clumsy efforts with the bow, supplemented by the sharp rolling of the little sloop in one of the extra heavy swells which now and again came rolling in, the effect was rather weird. But to Captain Heman, perspiring, red-faced, and all but falling over the viol now and then in his enthusiasm, it was a period of great bliss. Exercise after exercise he reeled off with much gusto, even if the effect produced was of the sort the compiler of the exercise-book had never dreamed.

With scarce a breathing space between them, one page of music after another fell victim to the captain's enthusiasm. And it was only when the cabin began to grow dusky with the coming of the murky twilight, that the captain laid aside the viol with a sigh of satisfaction.

"Well, that's goin' some for a beginner," he told himself. "That last exercise, Number 47, I done fust rate, if I do say it that shouldn't. What time's it git-tin' to be?" he ended, pulling out his heavy old silver watch.

So quickly and so happily had the past few hours sped by, that he could scarcely believe the hands which pointed to a few minutes before seven.

With a mind to getting back before the foggy darkness shut down on him completely, he went to the deck to haul in the anchor.

Before he reached the sloop's bow, however, he paused, listening intently. Somewhere off to port a schooner's fog-horn was whining away through the mist.

"Runnin' afore the wind," he commented, listening to the horn's repeated plaints. "Standin' in pretty close to the shoal, seems to me."

But this being none of his funeral, he went forward and began hauling up the anchor. The anchor was aboard and he was untying the stops on the mainsail, when he stopped suddenly to listen once again to the horn.

It came from well ahead, now, and the altered whine of the signal told his practiced ear that the vessel was on the star-board tack.

"What in Mars Hill is that feller up to?" he muttered. "He's headin' straight for Round Shoal ledge."

Again came the horn, this time so far shoreward that it left no room for doubt.

"He'll hit the ledge surer'n tunket," said the captain, throwing off the stops with feverish fingers, "unless I can run down nigh enough to him to make myself heard and warn him off before he *does* hit."

Nimble, Snow sped about the deck. The blocks creaked as the sails went up in record time. *Bang!* The boom went over and the mainsail filled with a sharp crack. He jumped to the little wheel and headed the bobbing craft towards the stranger's horn, and as she sped along he now and then raised his voice in a mighty hail in the vain hope he might be heard on the schooner's deck.

And then, just as the horn was sounding nearer and he was sure his shouts must be heard, from somewhere out of the fog ahead came a creaking smash, followed by the loud banging of loose-flapping sails and a faint hum of excited voices.

"She's hit for fair!" groaned Snow.

A moment later he could dimly make her out through the fog, a small schooner hanging there on the treacherous rocks of the ledge, her bows ripped wide open, her fore-topmast broken short off, and the foremast swaying crazily in its slackened rigging, as every swell lifted her and bumped her harshly against the ledge.

Captain Snow, peering through the fog as he approached the stricken craft, groaned aloud. There was no mistaking those lines amidships, no mistaking the length of the main-topmast, no mistaking the white patch halfway up the jib-top-sail. It was the *Luella*.

In a trice he was alongside.

"What does this mean? What in time are you doin' here, hung up like this?" he bawled at her skipper, who was standing by the pump, which all hands were working valiantly.

"Well, I seem to have hit Round Shoal Ledge, Heem, at a guess," the skipper responded.

"And stove all to thunder, aint ye?" Snow roared. "Haint ye sailed this coast long enough to know where yer goin' in a little mite of a fog like this? Huh?"

Hall bristled. "I guess I know this coast full as well as you do, Heem," he replied with asperity. "But when whistlin' buoys gets loose, like the one off Deep Harbor did, and drifts up Round Shoal way, I aint to be blamed, that's all."

"Whistlin' buoy loose!" Snow repeated. "Look ahere. I been out here ever since early afternoon, and I aint heard no whistlin' buoy."

"Haint ye? Then all is, you must be gittin' thunderin' deaf. I heard it a while ago as plain as day. Heard it so plain, I changed her course and headed due west for the harbor, like you do when you make the whistlin' buoy always. I was that sure of it. I heard it right along, too. I aint to blame for their buoys gittin' loose."

A sudden awful suspicion dawned upon the man at the wheel of the sloop.

"What time was it when you heard it?" he asked in a queer voice.

"Long about six. Cooky was jest ringin' the bell for supper."

Snow's hands tightened on the wheel-spokes in their grip. At six he must have been playing that 47th exercise—must have been trying, as he remembered he had tried over and over again, to get that deep note on the open "G" string. The sequence of events was only too apparent. With difficulty Snow smothered the groan which arose to his lips as he re-



membered his wife's words anent his fiddling. "No good'll ever come of sech foolishness."

"Is there any chance at all of savin' her, think?" he asked Hall with forced calm.

"It was jest about full tide when we struck. She's stove up for'ard somethin' awful, and ev'ry sea is settin' her onto the ledge wuss," Hall replied. "You might take me into Deep Harbor in that sloop of yours, and we'll see 'f we can git the tug to come out right off and see what can be done towards pulling her off'n here, though I guess, Heem, she's goin' to be a total loss to us."

"All right. Come aboard. We'll run in there right away," said Snow. "Say, Tom," he added, "fetch an axe with yer."

"An axe? All right. Hey, cooky, heave yer axe down to Cap'n Snow there."

When they were scudding for Deep Harbor under full sail, Snow called to his partner:

"Hey, Tom, take the wheel a minute, if you will."

And when Hall had taken the wheel, Captain Snow silently picked up the axe and disappeared down the steps of the little cabin companionway.

There followed the sound of a great splintering of wood, the booming of heavy viol strings as the axe found them, and certain muttered but whole-souled expletives which for reasons that are all too obvious are herein delicately omitted.

Onto the deck came Captain Snow, bearing in his arms something which went over the sloop's rail. The twisted, broken wreck of a bass viol bobbed drifting astern in the murky darkness.

## Christmas At Swamp Creek

BY HUGH PENDEXTER

Author of "Lem Tibbetts' Celestial Campaign," etc.

The Johnnies run and we give chase,  
What they call fight we call a race,  
Tee-do, tee-dum, the girls all hum,  
Soon the boys will be marching home.

AS Lieutenant Peerson's drenched and weary squad of dare-devil riders shouted this doggerel to the accompaniment of stamping feet and rattling sabers, the officer lifted his head in irritation. The meager light of a sickly candle revealed their thin, bronzed faces imperfectly as they sprawled in chairs and on the floor of the long hallway. Outside, the storm was worrying Swamp Creek into muddy foam as it leaped forward to join Hatcher's Run. The old Virginia mansion had been made just as night added to the discomfiture caused by the swirling tempest. Despite the egotism of their song the dozen survivors of the fruitless raid on the South Side railroad had been floundering for hours through the almost impassable roads with Lee's famine pinched men at their heels. It had been one of many attempts to destroy the de-

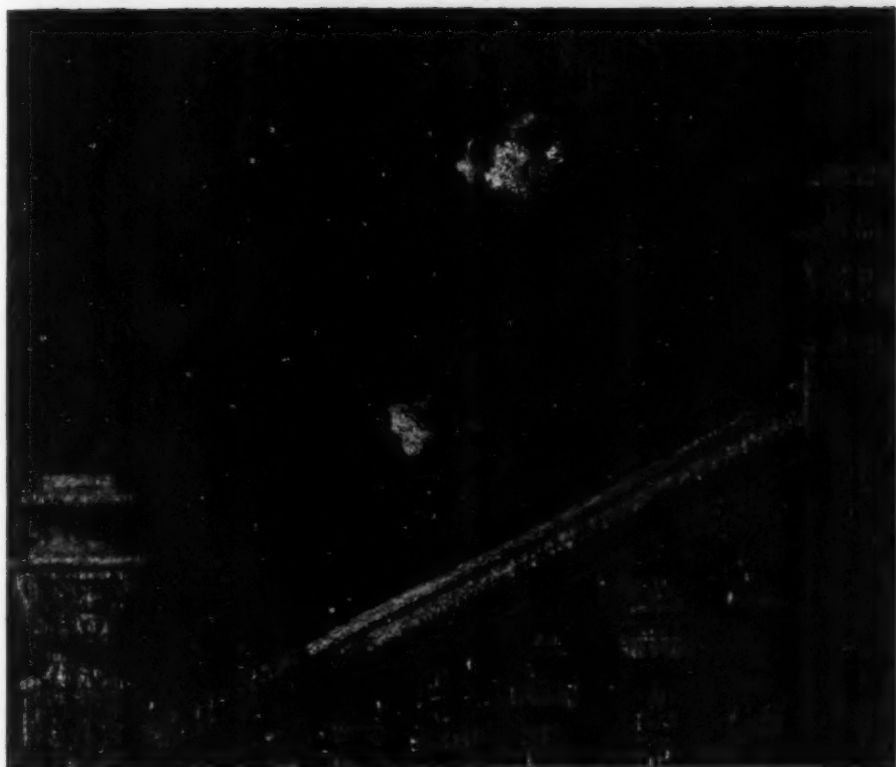
bilitated and only connecting link between the starving Confederate army and the scanty supplies of the South. And it had failed and Lieutenant Peerson was not in an amiable frame of mind.

Oh, the girls up North are jest the broth  
The girls down South are home-lee,  
Dum, dum, dum, beats the drum,  
Soon the boys will be marching home.  
Ye-o-w!

The wild yell punctuating this stanza and overcoming the clamor of the elements was the last straw, and the lieutenant in a peremptory voice commanded, "Let up on that damnable yowling."

Gray-haired Sergeant McKeen, ever partial to vocal treats, paused in wringing the water from his coat and whispered, "Leftenant darling; I told thim they could go ahead once we entered our lines. I thought a bit of singing might cheer thim up and kind of cilibrate its being Christmas Day."

The lieutenant silently surveyed the



He staggered to a side door where he knew he would find a back stairway

downcast faces peering from the shadows. He had forgotten it was Christmas, and he smiled sourly as he inventoried the day's doings. Barely escaped from his teens, he felt immeasurably older than these reckless veterans, who had so cheerfully endeavored at his command to rip up the worn rails that stood between Grant and Richmond. For many months he had told himself the war was about to end. If he pulled through, what remained for him but dreary routine and a life of regret?

However, his morose frame of mind did not preclude his conscience from winoing a bit as he again swung his eyes over the silent group. Could they find aught of cheer and good will in the day, God knows he should not hinder them, he rebuked himself. And rising and wrapping his soaked cloak about him he

strode to the door, gruffly conceding, "I forgot it is Christmas and that we are within our lines. Whoop it up if you want to and howl your heads off. I'm going outside to look at the horses."

"Hurrah for Lieutenant Peerson," cried young Tommy Butler. "Now, boys, all together and let the sergeant imitate the drum alone. Let her go."

Oh, I met a reb at 8 a. m.

Under each arm he had a ham—

But the conclusion of this incident was lost to the lieutenant once he opened the door to be clutched and dragged into the darkness by the shrieking, sleet-laden blasts. Bowing against the grip of the wind that clawed at his legs and pinioned his arms, he fought his way ankle-deep in slush and mud to an outer building where two disconsolate men were guarding the horses.

"Merry Christmas, sir," ironically greeted one of the guards, as the lieutenant stumbled inside the miserable shelter.

"Everything all right, eh?" growled the lieutenant. Then without waiting to be reassured he bluntly consoled, "You'll be relieved in two hours. Good-night."

As he began working his way to the house and leaned back against the crowding insistence of the storm, his gaze for a second swept the second-story windows of the long, rambling structure, and he exclaimed aloud in surprise as he caught the twinkle of a light. It vanished almost as soon as it had pricked a hole through the darkness. The mansion was deserted, he had believed, on taking refuge in it. He knew the old sergeant would allow none of the troopers to explore the place against his positive orders. Loosening his service revolver he staggered to a side door where he knew he would find a back stairway.

Holding his saber clear he cautiously ascended. The upper hall was black, with no relief from the sleet-lashed windows. As he advanced, he swept the wall with his left hand, his right holding the revolver half raised for action. Near the end of the hall a door gave before his groping search. As he had seen the light at the end of the house he unhesitatingly continued his quest until he had passed two more thresholds and was rewarded by a dull streak of yellow.

"Dum, dum, dum, beats the drum," filtered after him, as the storm paused to catch its breath.

Then, with weapon cocked, he gently seized the knob and turned it.

"Hands up!" he harshly commanded, detecting the movement of a figure behind the heavy curtains at the window.

The curtains became motionless for a moment, but as he was taking aim a woman stepped forth into the zone of a candle spluttering on the wall.

The lieutenant stared incredulously at the slim figure, the revolver still rigidly extended. She faced him quietly at first, but as recognition pervaded her gaze she retreated and placed a hand on a table as if to support her shrinking form.

"Kate!" he whispered. "Can it be you?"

"Rodney!" she murmured, now surveying him wildly. "You here?"

His arm dropped limply as he muttered, "It isn't real. I can't understand it. You here, Kate?"

"It is my home," she replied, her voice toned to an almost inaudible key.

"But how?" he dazedly demanded, rubbing a hand across his eyes as if doubting the reality of her presence. "You live in Georgia. You said up North on that last day—"

Then his faculties sharpened. That last day up North when he was in college and met her while she was visiting friends! The day over which he had brooded and sorrowed for four long years! Again it was commencement week and she had won his heart and had told him to wait until she came back again. She had left him and he had lived only in thoughts of her return. In an instant he had reviewed the blank that intervened; the breaking out of the war, his response to Lincoln's call, the chaos of bloodshed. It all formed an hiatus that seemed an eternity as he bridged it in a second.

"You came with the men below?" she was asking in a dull voice.

"I wrote you repeatedly and you never answered my letters," he choked.

"I did not dare to lock the doors," she whispered. "I hoped you would rest a bit and then go away."

The new light blazing in his eyes, the light of rekindled hope and passion, burned low at her query, and in a harsh voice he demanded: "You received my letters and would not write? Now I've found you, you ask me to leave you? I've lived in hell all these years and you ask me to stay there? You didn't mean what you said on the campus?"

"I am here alone," she weakly reminded. "I ask you to go. It is no time for explanations now. You have not much farther to ride. I think the storm has lifted. Will you go?"

As he stared at her the rude chorus from below took advantage of the subsiding winds and floated up the stairway:

Dum, dum, dum, beats the drum,  
Soon the boys will be marching home.



"You shall not harm him!" she panted



"Home," he bitterly repeated, his lips grimacing. Without removing his gaze from her wan face he reached behind him and softly closed the door against the jarring hilarity, and humbly begged: "You don't mean you'll send me away, Kate, now that I've found you? Not without some word!"

"If ever you thought kindly of me, go at once, Rodney," she pleaded, her mental distress apparent in her voice.

He slipped the revolver into the holster and folding his arms gazed at her sternly, all gentleness gone from his visage. "Then it is true; you never meant what you said up there?" And he jerked his head to indicate the North-land. "You were fooling me, playing with me? Have you any excuse to make?"

She hung her head and faintly defended. "I wanted to be honest. I thought I knew, but I was mistaken. I did not have the courage to write and tell you. You are a man—you can be generous."

"True, Miss Morgan. I will say no more to you," he gritted. "You are safe behind the proprieties. But if it's Henry Coleman that's come between us, I only hope this war will last till I can find him in front of me."

"No, no. Don't say that, Rodney," she wildly besought, drawing close to him in her emotion. "Oh, you do not mean that. I wanted to be honest. I thought I was not mistaken. But—" Her voice sank to a whimpering moan and she turned from him, burying her face in her hands.

"By heavens! It is Coleman, then," he whispered, striding forward. "Then I'll find him, war or no war. He knew you were promised to me. I'll find him and I'll—"

"You shall not," she broke in to destroy his threat, and her whole frame trembled as she faced him with hands clinched. "He had as much right to love me as you did. The mistake was mine."

As she defended his successful rival his face became gnarled with impotent and jealous rage. He opened his lips to charge her anew with perfidy, when a clear voice from an inner room held him speechless with mouth agape by calling out, "Right wheel! By fours, trot!"

The tableau endured but briefly, and with a spring the lieutenant swept the terrified woman from his path and gained the door beyond the table. Unheeding her shrill cry as she failed to stay him, he wrenched at the knob.

Stretched on a bed, mumbling incoherently, his face flushed with delirium, was a man. With a quick movement Pearson stepped back, snatched the candle from its socket and returning, bent low over the tossing figure. Then with an inarticulate sound he staggered back, his face distorted. "Coleman!" he hoarsely cried. "Coleman! Here with you—alone."

"You shall not harm him," she panted, clutching his arm and struggling to keep him from re-entering the room. "You shall not harm him."

"Coleman," he whispered, oblivious to her efforts and methodically restoring the candle, even pausing to rub the drippings from his hand. "Within our lines. Captain Coleman, of the Confederate army, within our lines—and not in uniform."

The horrible significance of his words beat her to her knees, and fumbling for his hand with both of hers, she moaned, "Oh, not that! I swear he is not a spy. He was wounded. His men brought him where I might take care for him—to give him a chance to live. He is helpless. He can harm no one. Oh, I pray you to forget it all and go."

"Forward, men! Charge!" broke in the delirious officer's voice; then it subsided to a pitiful muttering.

Gently disengaging her hands and raising her to her feet, Lieutenant Pearson turned upon her a face gray with the conflict waging within him. She stood immovable, awaiting the sentence.

"Miss Morgan," he huskily began, "I believe I am man enough to wish my meeting with him had been on a different footing. I wish to God I had not found him here."

She pressed her hands to her heart, but her voice was almost listless as she asked, "You mean you will take him from me?"

"As an officer and a Northerner I owe it to my general and my country to re-

move this man as soon as it can be done without endangering his life," he replied, his tone drearily monotonous. "My orders are explicit."

"And you can answer your conscience in so doing?" she asked.

"I must answer to every mother and wife up North. I must answer to every child left without a father; to every comrade who has fallen in this struggle. I must do my duty," he replied.

She tottered to the window and for a moment rested her aching forehead against the glistening glass. "You would not leave him for my sake?" she murmured.

"No."

The finality of his refusal seemed to rouse her benumbed mind, and with quick strides she was at his side again, her face uplifted. "Not for the sake of the love you once felt for me? Not even for that?"

His throat contracted with a physical pain and he could only shake his head for an answer.

She looked up into his face fixedly and next demanded, "Is there nothing that will move you from your purpose to turn this sick man over to Grant's executioners? If I had loved you, you would not have done it for my sake?" The sweat seemed to blister his brow as he remained silent. And she continued, her voice reminding him of a child's treble, "If I should tell you now that I love you, you would not be merciful?"

Locking his hands and then tearing them apart so as to loosen his cloak at the neck and with his face twisted in agony he choked: "It isn't a question of me or you, of my love or my hate. It's a question of honor. He must be taken."

"Then never speak again of woman's fickleness. Never again sneer at woman's use of the word generosity," she whispered. "Never deny that this is a man's world—horrible and brutal. That man lying there is my husband."

He viewed her outburst as if not comprehending; his intelligence was befuddled. Outside the wind had given up the contest and now, despite the closed door, the doggerel faintly beat upon their ears:

Oh, the girls up North are just the broth,  
The girls down South are home-lee,  
Dum, dum, dum, beats the drum,  
Soon the boys will be marching home.

"Do you understand?" she asked. "Captain Coleman is my husband. We were married in Georgia four years ago."

"Your husband," he muttered.

"Salute your officer," commanded the man on the bed in a thick voice.

With mechanical precision Lieutenant Peerson's heels clicked together and he brought his hand up smartly. Then, emerging from his stupor with a start, he rapidly said, "I will leave a guard until he is able to be moved."

He was leaving her, and she could utter no words to detain him. She had urged him to go; now her soul was fighting for some expedient to keep him. As he stiffly gained the door she became galvanized into action, and with a wild protest darted forward and stood between him and the threshold.

"Wait!" she said. "A moment only. Come here." As she spoke she seized his hand and pulled him to an alcove, screened by curtains. Tearing these aside she reached for the candle and held it above her head and pointed at a child slumbering in a crib.

As Peerson gazed on the placidity of the youngster, idly noting one little fist clinched against the cheek, she whispered: "You make war on men and women. Do you war against babies?"

"Your child?" he dully inquired.

"My boy," she murmured, her voice coming in sobs. "You say women forget. My mistake—was honest. I did you a great wrong in not telling you. I was very sorry. My husband knew it—he let me prove it the only way I knew." She could speak no further, the quick intake of her breath choking back the words she would have uttered.

"What do you call him?" asked Peerson, with a catch in his voice, as he realized he was gazing at her child.

"Henry Rodney Coleman," she whimpered. "I wanted to make it up in some way for not letting you know."

Possibly disturbed by the reiterated vocal efforts downstairs, or perhaps aroused by the light, the boy now yawned



"You make war on men and women. Do you war against babies?"

luxuriously and woke up. His blinking gaze returned the officer's earnest scrutiny, as if he, too, were making an inventory. His eyes were very like his mother's, large and serious. As the two studied each other, the boy was the first to arrive at a conclusion. For, deciding the strange face contained nothing but amiability, he caught at the officer's hand and sought to tug him down beside the crib.

There was no resisting the little hand and Peerson sank to his knees and bowed his head until his face touched the velvet cheek. Coleman Jr., crowed in triumph, and unheeding his mother's presence, next devoted both hands to investigating the metal things on the officer's collar.

As the little fingers sought to trace the outlines of the emblems and the wide, serious eyes blinked in the glint from them, gurgles of infantile delight issued from the rounded lips. The man had never before sensed the touch of baby fingers and the magic that they wrought was reflected in his worn, tired face. A curious light, blended of yearning and tenderness, flickered in his eyes and his mouth lost a meed of its setness. So he knelt there, bending over the cowering baby, as if oblivious to all else.

At last Peerson rose and backed from the alcove. He stared at the crib silently while the mother stood watching him in her final agony, and then abruptly saluted the youngster and in a strained voice announced: "The kid wins, Kate. I should be court martialed for it; but keep your man. Good-by."

"I thank you," she sobbed, humbly following him to the door. "When he grows up I'll tell him of his first Christmas and of your gift—to him."

"And to you, Mrs. Coleman," he gently amended. "I'll take my men and go, now."

As he was about to close the door her quicker ears caught an alarm, and she restrained him, crying, "Hark! What is that?"

He became alert and listened. Some one was blundering hurriedly through the upper hall. Next a low voice called, "Lieutenant! Lieutenant Peerson! Where are you?"

"Here," he answered, stepping forward to meet the intruder. "Is it you, McKeen?"

"No, it's Butler," replied the youth, trying to conceal his amazement at beholding the woman. "About two hundred rebels have thrown a circle around the house, the guards say. It'll be warm work breaking through."

No sooner had he given this warning than she darted by them, directing: "Tell your men to stay where they are and show no light. It is my husband's company."

The two clattered after her down the stairs and the squad became silent as the word was passed. A loud knock sounded on the outer door, and she calmly opened it.

"Who is it?" she asked.

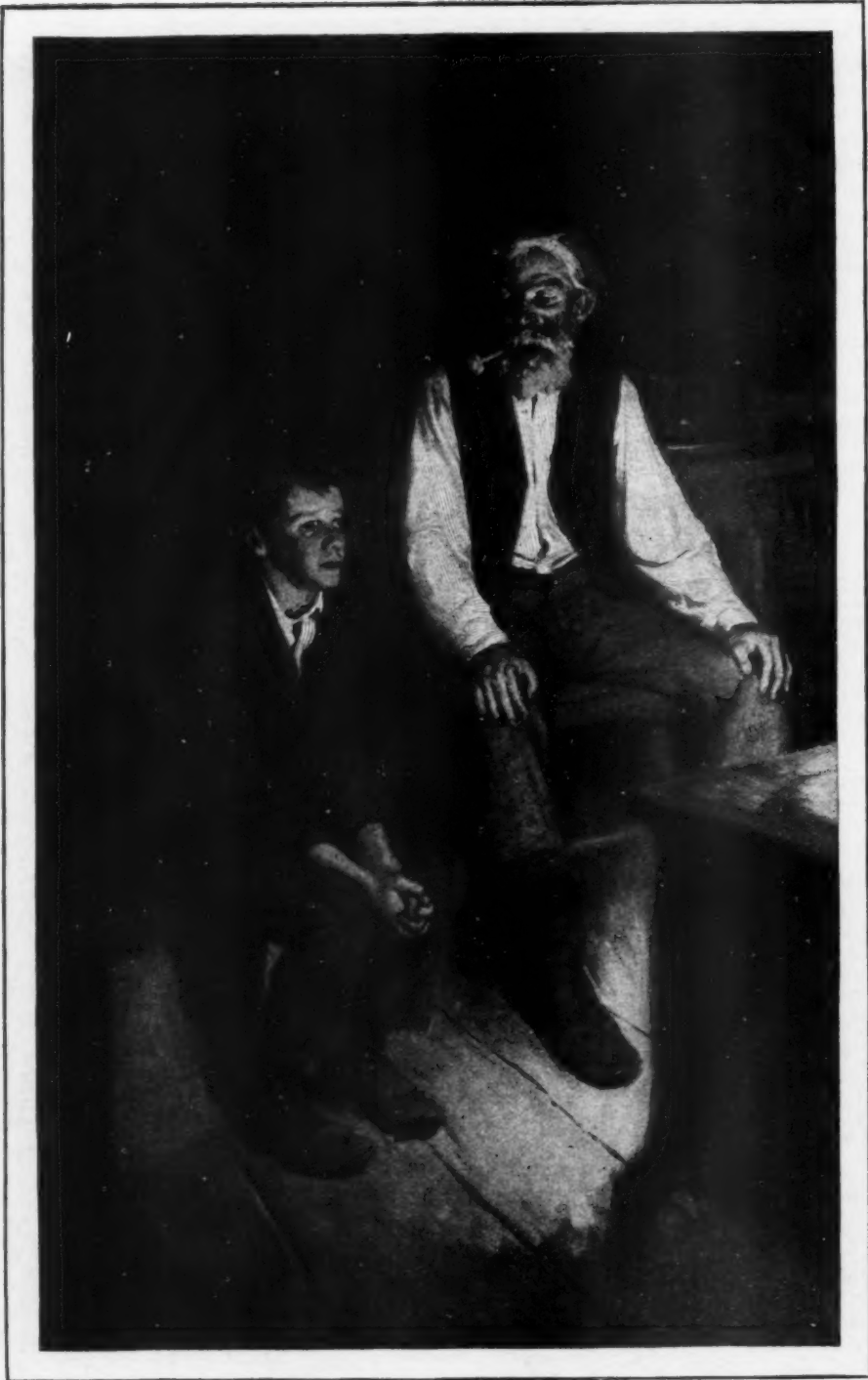
"Lieutenant Roice, of Captain Coleman's company," informed an eager voice. "One of our scouts heard the noise of men singing over here, and we've come to see if the captain is all right. We were a little worried."

"I heard the singing. It was a squad of men," she said. "I thank you for your care, but I must ask you to go on, as Captain Coleman will be worse if he hears your men or the horses. Rest assured we are safe."

"We know that, Mrs. Coleman," proudly replied the officer, turning away. "The Yanks have fallen back half a mile and you've been inside our lines for more'n six hours. We'll ride north to investigate the carol-singers. Good-night, and a Merry Christmas."

Fifteen minutes later a thin line of men splashed their way towards White Oak road in search of the Federal outposts. Their leader rode with chin hugging his collar, oblivious to all but the picture of a tiny boy demanding friendship.





"If his left eye was gone I'd say it was old Red Eye"

To accompany "Red Eye"

# Red Eye

BY PERCY CUSHING

Author of "Trail's End," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. ROSCOE SHRADER

RED EYE was a canvasback. To be sure, he had only one eye, a cold, brown, beady little eye that was not red at all; but the socket where the other should have been was the dull, turgid color of November sunsets. He would have brought three dollars, nicely browned and stuffed on a restaurant table, and even the game dealer down on the long rattling street at the city wharves would have looked on him with admiration. That would have been high tribute, for when buying stock, city game dealers never exhibit admiration; it is bad business policy.

But Red Eye had never seen the city—except one wild twilight when he was caught up in a southeast storm and whirled out of his course in the blinding snow. Then his single eye had discerned a small wedge of geese driving aimlessly into the wall of rushing whiteness, and he had followed them instinctively. It was only when he found they had left their leader crippled in a western lake and were themselves lost, that he had sensed something strange in the world of air beneath him, and looking down had seen a vast milky blur through the hissing, flake-like starlight, from an infinity of fog. Then he had sheered sharply upward and away for he had felt that fear of the abode of man which is in the nature of all wild things.

All his life Red Eye had spent along the coast, from the chill, gray sea of far Newfoundland to the sun-licked coves of the Carolinas and even beyond to the green bayous of Florida. It was along this vast sweep of beach and inlet and bar that he had met with the accident that had given him his name. Year after year he had made the voyage—south when the autumn storms stirred in the

grim caverns of the north, and north again when the warm winds crept in from the gulf.

He knew every bay, every cove of that mighty coast. Each he had visited while resting from the fury of sleet filled gales; or dawdling slowly in advance of warm weather. Into some he had dropped through the black mystery of wild spring nights with the rain blighting the stars and the earthy smells of the sodden lands creeping out to sea. Into others he had pitched from the bleakness of November twilights when the storm tore the waves to shreds of foam and the beaches droned all the long night with the thunder of the surf. And in every bay and cove and inlet he knew where the wild celery grew most abundantly, where the tender mussels lay nearest the surface and where the young shoots of bottom grass were rich and plentiful. Also he knew where lay the grim, sun-red-denied faces of men who spoke death through long, dark tubes.

These places he avoided. Once only had he forgotten himself for a moment, and for that moment he had paid dearly. The angry red gash where his eye had been was always there to remind him of it. But after all, it had been a good lesson, and it had served to sharpen the eye that remained against further encounters with the death dealing tubes. And as for his voyages, he could have done as well without eyes at all, for he guided his aerial marches more by instinct than by sight.

To one of these inlet-fed bays that crept close within the beaches like a monstrous, shining lizard, came the boy with the drooping jaw and the sullen, cold eyes. He had left the muzzle-load-

ing gun of other days out in the farmhouse on the western lake where often he had matched his cunning and determination against those gray roamers of the skies, the wild geese; and in its place he brought a cheap, single-barrel, breech-loader, bright and blue from the shop and with a death dealing blow at both ends. All summer he nursed it, trying lock and hammer, and each day he took it from its case, snapped on the fore-end and went out in the field near the cottage. There he aimed tentatively at darting swallows with finger on trigger. Time after time he threw the piece to his shoulder, sighted quickly and lowered it. He was practicing, practicing, preparing himself for what time was certain to bring. In the afternoons he would sit with the gun across his knees, talking softly to himself as boys will, fingering the top snap, dropping a ten-cent piece into the muzzle to test the choke, sighting along the barrel at imaginary things.

And day by day the summer waned, the leaves yellowed, strange gusts stirred in the hedges and the branches of the trees rubbed against each other and groaned complainingly. Down where the bay flared eastward into the face of the rising sun the water crawled gray in the cool dawns and in the afternoons gleamed bronze and pale purple. Sudden chill gusts of air coming from nowhere, like hurrying phantoms, licked the bronze to frosted silver and died. The twilights were chilled steel.

The somber shadow of autumn was falling across the country, and the red sun, lifting later each dawn from behind the waste of water and sand, found the boy day after day standing on a long, marsh point below the cottage scanning the northern sky.

"Humph," he said one daybreak. "Howank, the old honker, mayn't come here, but old Whistle Wings will, and he'll do." He meant the mallard duck whose soft winnowing of wings he had heard in his home in the west. After a minute he drew in his breath sharply.

"Whew, and old Canvas Shoulders—wont we teeter him some?"

The boy had never seen that master of all deep water ducks, the canvasback.

They did not visit the region in which he had lived, but Uncle Ebenezer, whose home was in a little driftwood hut across the bay, on the long sand barrier against which the ocean crooned in summer, and which barred the tumult of crashing gray seas in winter, had told him about them, and he was thrilling for their arrival.

October moved through its scarlet and gold and the drab bleakness of November days settled to rain soaked beaches and restless leagues of water. And when the tiny, sailing skiff with her mildewed sail beat across the bay with the boy and the gun, the hosts of old Canvas Shoulders had arrived.

With burning eyes the boy saw them in broad rafts riding easily to the choppy swells on the shelving sand flats, and his long jaw set cruelly. It was only to his sub-conscious mind that the grace, the beauty of those wide living acres appealed. That part of him of which he was aware was fascinated by the dream of seeing them crumple and pitch before the hail of his gun.

He cast up his small, cold eyes, and the westering sun flamed back the blood lust from them.

"See 'em get up, thousands and thousands of 'em," he gasped. "What wouldn't I give to whale it to that flock."

He was near the beach when a large raft of ducks lifted and swung across not far ahead of him. Their wings were long and hooked, and he noted the sharply defined darks and whites of their plumage.

"Gosh, they're canvas fellows all right," he exclaimed. "Know them from Uncle Eb's description, sure pop."

Then something caught his attention.

"Whew," he gasped. "See that old walloper out in front. Jiminy, he looks almost as big as old Howank—and watch the others follow his lead."

That night the glow from a red hot stove fell on the faces of a grizzled man and a lean, long jawed boy in the cabin nestled among the wind searched dunes. The face of the boy was eager, expectant, aglow, with the anticipation of youth. On that of the man was an expression of kindly reminiscence. The boy was speaking.

"And Uncle Eb, there was one old wal-loper out ahead looked as big as a barn and the gang followed him like he was a general."

The man sat suddenly upright, on the backless chair.

"Was he bli—how close was you to him, that big un, son?" he questioned quickly.

"Oh, not very close—too far to shoot, or I'd had him here now," answered the boy.

"You couldn't tell if his left eye was gone, if he didn't have any eye on that side—no in course not, he was too far."

"No, I couldn't."

"Um," mused the old man, "a regular whopper, and the rest of the flock fol-lering, and—if his left eye was gone I'd say it was old Red Eye."

"What's Old Red Eye?" the boy asked.

Uncle Eb sank back on the broken chair. "Red Eye," he said slowly, "could see out of both sides once. After he met me he couldn't see out of only one. But it's been a long while—well nigh five years, I guess. You go up the east beach to-morrow—the east beach be sure—and you'll come to Nor'east Shoal, right off Horse-shoe Cave. Mebbe you'll meet him there."

The day came lean and cold up the eastern waves and revealed the boy plodding into the sunrise. Ahead of him the long beach stretched gauntly like the bony finger of a giant. Over across the dunes on the ocean side he might have heard the breakers pounding hoarsely on the surf-smoothed sand had he listened, but he didn't listen. His attention was riveted to other things. It was fixed on the uneven shore line of the bay where the seaweed was piled high from the rising tides and where a few scattered beach cedars reeled drunkenly from the gray tangle of briars and sand growth.

Over his shoulder lay the cheap single-barrel and he fingered it uneasily as his red, eager eyes picked up flock after flock of ducks far off shore. Sometimes he crouched in the shelter of twisted brown mounds of sea weed as he reconnoitered ahead, watching a raft of birds closer in shore than the majority. Then he would detour and advance cau-

tiously, his body bent double, his long jaw thrown out and his little eyes wells of living flame. Once he crept close to a lonely shelldrake on shore and the murderous hail from the single barrel ended its life. And always he was drawing closer to North-east Shoal.

He had never seen the yellow glare of the hard sand bottom of that bar running its long, oval back beneath the water for half a mile off shore only to shelve off into ten feet of black water, but he knew it lay right out from the crescent shaped cove that flared ahead.

"Look out for canvasbacks close in under the west point of the cove," Uncle Eb had told him, and the boy remembered just in time to drop back behind a clump of grass as a broad raft of fowl on the water swam into his vision. Even in that fleeting glance he had seen that they were close in, and for a moment he crouched, breathless with excitement. Then ever so slowly he raised his eyes above the tangle, and an exclamation broke from his lips.

Out a dozen yards from the bulk of the raft was a large bird—larger than any of the rest, the sharp blacks and whites of its plumage vivid against the dark water. Instinctively the boy recognized the big leader he had seen at the head of the flying flock the day before.

"Red Eye," he gasped, as hardly knowing why, he applied the name Uncle Eb had used. And then he began to crawl. Back to the shelter of the beach growth he wormed, and turned up the shore. Foot by foot he crept, pausing occasionally to peer cautiously ahead from behind a tangle. At last only a screen of thin gray grass lay between him and the water where he judged the birds were feeding.

Then he looked quickly up to find that the flock, warned by some subtle sense of danger, had been swimming out from shore all the while he had been stalking and now was far beyond range. Until the sun drifted from view behind his shoulder and the shadow from his gun barrel stretched down over the sand to the water's edge, he waited, but the raft held well away. At last he turned westward towards the cabin.





Back to the shelter of the beach growth he wormed

But during those hours of watching he had learned something of Red Eye, if indeed that large leader was Red Eye. He knew that he could never fail to recognize him again; that he was as wary as a wild goose, and that it would take more than mere caution to bag him.

The next day and the next, and for many days, the drab dawns found the boy plodding into the sunrise towards the shoal, and the sunsets struck red into his little eyes at the close of the shortening days. But always Red Eye, for Uncle Eb had assured the boy that it was he, remained swimming easily at the head of the raft just out of range. Each sunset saw the droop in the boy's long jaw more dogged and the gleam in his eyes darker as he turned homeward. Sometimes he ground his teeth cruelly, and in the fury of sleet-swept twilights his voice rasped hoarsely: "I'll get him, I will if it takes a hand."

Little by little the desire to kill other birds lost its hold. Once he passed a dozen red-heads within easy gunshot. A pot shot would have cost five of their number at least, but he paid no heed. Of shelldrake he could have killed many. Even when three of Red Eye's raft, bewildered by the powdery snow in a driving gale, ventured close to this place of concealment where he had been crouching for five long hours, he did not raise his gun. The blood lust that gripped him was centered solely on the one lone leader that defied him.

Deep within him lay that fundamental force of will, that smouldering fire of determination that is in the soul of all things primeval. It was the instinct of fight that is born of those places where the struggle is grim and the only law is the survival of the fittest.

He had fought hard for the prize, had resorted to every ruse he could devise and all those Uncle Eb had suggested, and his failure had but strengthened his determination to succeed. Like a snake creeping on its prey he had wormed himself through the frozen briars time after time only to see the old drake move gently but surely from shore as he approached. Day after day he had waited behind a tuft of grass or

a hummock of seaweed, hoping that Red Eye would drift close enough for a shot, but he had waited in vain. Then, sometimes, when he had covered half-a-mile of the way to the shanty he had looked back along a beam from the westering sun and seen his quarry swimming close under the shore within a dozen yards from the very tuft behind which he had been concealed. More than once he had retraced his steps, moving with the utmost caution, and as darkness was falling had lifted his head above the briars only to find that Red Eye, as though warned by some unseen presence, had moved out again too far for a shot.

Then the pale moon had looked down on the boy clumping into the vague leagues of darkness of the low beach with teeth shut and long jaw thrust deeper forward into the gloom. All these things but doubled that grim determination that fights to the end.

At times he had almost believed that the leader of the raft was an unreality. Several times, when after one of these long stalks he had returned only to find the bird he had seen feeding quietly a dozen yards from the shore now well out in the middle of the cove, he had felt a strange creepy feeling come over him.

"Cuss if he aint got the old devil in him," he had muttered as he tramped back into the night towards the cabin. And then he had looked over his shoulder quickly as though he half expected to see a lone canvasback following him through the gloom just out of range.

It was December and the spirit of cold was clamping tight over the land when he hit upon a plan. During these days of watching he had learned much of the habits of the big bird. No matter how carefully he might approach, he knew that something would warn Red Eye of his presence. He knew that, because always when he looked out from the cover, he had seen the canvasback well out in open water, head lifted, looking back shoreward with every evidence of alarm.

"I've got to get something to attract his attention out on the bar," the boy thought. "Something to keep him inter-

ested while I am sneaking. And yet it mustn't be enough to make him fly. So it's got to be something that'll keep still, just like I keep still in the grass. If I can fix it, then maybe I'll get him."

The next afternoon found him rowing up to shore in an old dugout. In it were the same decoys with which once he had tried unsuccessfully to lure Red Eye within range and which had seemed to alarm the old drake more than no decoys at all. By their side was a bundle of long branches he had cut from the cedars near the cabin. He reached the edge of the shoal and planted the bushes firmly in the hard sand bottom about a hundred yards from shore opposite the center of the horse shoe shaped cove. About them he anchored the decoys. He had rigged the blind in the spot near which he had most often observed Red Eye. Then he pulled the dugout back up the shore half a mile and hauled her out.

"Now I'll get him or bust," he whispered hoarsely to himself, and turned toward the cabin for a wink of sleep.

Two hours before daylight he plunged breakfastless into the cold, rushing gloom of the eastern shore. A strong icy gale gathered the darkness and billowed it upon him. The cold gnawed at his face and shot through his clothing. For a week there had been ice on the far shore of the bay and now it was forming along the beach. He could hear it crackling in the shallow hollows in the sand beneath his feet. He knew too that the increasing cold would weave it out from the sand quickly until it claimed all the coves and bays, and the thought made him hasten. Faintly the dawn opened a tiny rent in the leaden reaches of sky. Mile by mile he plodded on, always the anxiety of the struggle goading him. When the pale rip in the east widened to a long ragged seam he was nearing the cove.

Instinctively, he began to move like a wild thing. There was all the stealth of the beast of prey in his actions. It was in his silent fox-like tread, in the cat-like stealth of his swaying body. It shone from his narrowed, eager eyes.

Half-a-mile from the nearer point of the cove he slipped back behind the low

sand dunes and entered the tangle of frozen beach growth. He dropped on hands and knees and began to crawl, working his way noiselessly among the briars. Once he crept near the edge of the shore to reconnoitre. Out on the shoal scarcely two hundred yards ahead, the bulk of his blind reared from the water. About it the decoys swung jerkily to their anchors in the choppy sea. Just beyond and in shore of them he saw a close ranked raft of real ducks and he knew that Red Eye was in it.

Lowering his head he wormed back to the cover of the briars. Like a snake he crawled across an open space of white sand to the next screen of growth. Squirming over a white mound, he descended into a shallow gully scooped out by the wind, and heard a quick winnowing of wings overhead. Instantly his hands tightened about his gun and his red eyes lifted. Above him within easy range, a dozen white breasts and brick colored heads flared sharply. They were canvasbacks coming in over the beach, but in that quick upward glance he saw that there was no big leader at their head, and he lay still until they had swung out into the bay.

Then he continued. It took minutes for him to move a dozen yards. One looking down on him from a fair height would have been unable to tell that he was moving at all. But he *was* moving, moving steadily, surely, though almost imperceptibly. While for an instant he lay resting on his stomach in a shallow depression, a bevy of crows flapped over him scarcely a dozen feet away. He felt the wind from their wings on the back of his neck, but he did not stir. He lay absolutely motionless for minutes, for he knew should they discover him their cries of alarm would sound a warning to the ducks that lay just over the fringe of grass ahead.

The screech of a sea gull soaring high above filled him with an agonized fear lest it had seen him and was shrieking alarm. The knife-like edges of frozen beach grass cut through his clothing and sliced across his flesh, but he did not notice. The briars gnawed at his knees

and tore the skin from his hands. He did not feel. One purpose held him, one purpose alone, overshadowing, out-weighing the hurts of the flesh. It was the lust to kill, to kill where killing had long been denied.

The chill gray wind swept mirthlessly across the barren beach, and the cold drew close to the frozen sand, but he was aware of neither. Beads of perspiration burst out on his face. His breath came sharply in hissing gasps. And always he wormed onward, onward toward the innermost sweep of the crescent.

Then he came upon a bunch of white, dry grass and knew that he had reached the shore directly opposite the blind. For the first time he drew a long breath and felt the cold sweep of the wind at his back.

For an instant he dared not look above the screen of grass. The reaction of that long, tense stalk overwhelmed him. He was shaking like a leaf, but he shut his teeth desperately, and slowly, very slowly, raised his eyes level with the gray grass. Then his heart came up choking him and he struggled hard to swallow the huge lump that filled his throat.

A hundred yards to his right and drifting slowly towards him, well inshore of the dark huddle of the bush blind, was a long ragged raft of ducks. Out in front perhaps fifty feet, the blacks and whites of its plumage strangely vivid, swam a single large drake.

"Red Eye!" The words rasped harshly from the boy's lips. Then the tide of his excitement rushed over him almost robbing him of his caution and for an instant he could hardly restrain himself from dashing down upon the shore and risking the chance of a long shot dropping the prize as it rose from the water. But his cunning prevailed and he flattened close to the hard sand. He noted with a thrill that as the raft and the leader drew closer abreast of him it slowly yet perceptibly swung nearer the shore away from the suspicious looking blind out on the shoal. His ruse was working. The dummy blind was holding the attention of the birds off shore and they were coming right in to him, unsuspectingly, of their own accord. His

first battles with Red Eye had been combats of instinct and stealth—and he had lost. Now to his side he had added a brain that could plan and the struggle was unequal. But he felt no pity.

And always the old drake, the wizard of the cove, came to him, steering warily away from the bulk of the blind—came to him because the instinct that guided it south at the touch of the ice and north at the caress of warm winds, that warned it from dangerous shoals where slim tubes spoke death, was but an instinct alone, an instinct that had never been warped to the outlines of a lie.

Then but a scanty thirty yards separated the brick-brown head of Red Eye from the drawn, eager face behind the tuft of grass on shore. And in that instant the boy, leaping like lightning to his feet, saw along a shining gun barrel only the gray back of a great bird climbing desperately for its life.

Red Eye fell, not limply with the spread wings that betoken death, but with a quick downward slant, and as he struck the water he dived. And the boy, as he rushed to the edge of the shore, his knuckle bone white where he gripped the single-barrel trying to insert another cartridge, looked out upon a bare sweep of cold waves and far out over it the lessening cloud of a great raft of ducks that swung far down the horizon waveringly until the distance took it.

For a moment only he hesitated, scanning keenly the wind swept water for the bobbing head of the wounded prize. Then he started back along the shore for the spot where he had left the dug-out the day before. He dragged the frail craft over the crystals of ice that were now forming rapidly off shore, and clambered in. The oars were frozen to the bottom boards. He pried them loose with his gun barrel, and pulled desperately for the cove. He reached the spot where he had seen the smother of foam close over Red Eye as he dived and paused to look around. He swept the tumbling water for a hundred yards on all sides. Steadying himself with an oar he stood up and looked long. Then he flung himself again on the single thwart



and pulled furiously. A dark moving speck on the water out shore from him had popped into his vision. The boy rowed for it, rowed desperately with every atom of his strength, and when again he paused to look over his shoulder, the head of the crippled canvasback had vanished.

Once more he stood up in the shaky boat, balancing himself against the force of the wind that was growing steadily stronger and colder. Again the speck swam into his vision, this time further across the cove and off shore where a sweep of floe ice driven by the gale was piling up against a narrow sand bar that reared abruptly in the deep water.

Dropping to the thwart, the boy once more pulled for the bobbing dot. Time after time the head of the diving bird popped up and disappeared, always just too far for the finishing shot. An hour passed, and steadily the chase led further away from shore and nearer the ragged edge of the ice that swept in a long, flat island out into the bay.

A dozen times the boy raised his gun, striving to cover the dark speck of life in the water, but always before he could pull trigger it vanished in the white crest of a wave. Hour after hour came and went, and the pursuit began to tell on the quarry and hunter. Always Red Eye moved further out from shore and nearer the ice, and the boy, driving his craft with the doggedness of his spirit when his strength failed, followed. Afternoon arrived and the flimsy dugout was out beyond the shelter of the point where the growing gale heaved up foaming seas and licked the crests from them with scimitar sweeps. Occasionally the boy looked anxiously shoreward as the rush of the icy blast struck in through his clothing. He could no longer keep his balance as he stood up to search for the bobbing head. When he turned to look ahead for the quarry, he gripped the gunwales to steady the craft. Now and then the top of a green-gray sea spilled a freezing sheet over the rail that froze to the bottom boards almost as soon as it touched.

The dugout was close under the ragged reach of the jammed ice now, so close

that the grinding of the edges as the waves crushed over them sounded harshly loud in the boy's ears. Just ahead out where the full force of the wind struck down over a dozen miles of frigid bay, a sharp point of ice jutted shelvingly from the main jam. Looking over his shoulder the boy saw the dark dot he had been chasing, it seemed for years, dive to reappear quickly from exhaustion. And then a gray sea, rising high, hissed over the edge of the ice, and carrying the wounded bird with it left it high up on the floe. The boy drove his oars into the water, backing for dear life to hold the dugout from the ice for just an instant—that instant for which he had struggled for hours. But even as he reached for the gun, another gray crest lifting quickly, gathered under the stern of his fragile craft, swept her forward and upward, held her poised for an instant while the gale swept a sheet of spume from its crest, and then with a jarring shock dropped her, badly stove, on the back of the jam.

The terror of the moment sent the boy trembling for a heart beat, and in the fear for his own safety the purpose that had dominated him was forgotten. Clutching the sides of the shattered boat he stared about him and his eyes fell on a feebly struggling heap of feathers scarcely thirty yards distant. Automatically he reached between his feet for the gun. It was gone. The black mud bottom beneath ten feet of freezing water at the edge of the ice held it safe.

He stuck his feet over the gunwale and tried the ice about the boat cautiously. It was firm. Inch by inch he moved across it towards the struggling mass of feathers. Slowly the space that separated him from the prize diminished. He was within a dozen feet of it when he stopped—stopped with a new, strange sensation working up along his throat. The fear for his own safety was gone. He looked at the bird closely. Its head was half towards him. Just above and behind the long, sloping bill was a red, ugly hole. It was an empty eye socket, and from it blood was dropping red on the ice. The boy knew his pot shot from the shore had done it.

The maimed bird flopped feebly. The other side of its head came into view. "Red Eye!" The words croaked harshly from the boy's stiffened lips. He knew then where it had got its name. The other socket was red and empty too, but there was no sign of blood. It was an old wound.

Silently he turned and worked his way back to the shattered dugout. In that moment, above the primitive spirit which loves to kill for the killing's sake, was born a new thing—the spark of pity which lies dormant in the hearts of men.

And so the windy twilight came and night closed the boy in with the misery of the cold and the insistent voice of hunger. He could not reach the shore. The island of ice on which he was marooned was a full half-mile from the nearest point of land. He was penned in by the gray bleakness of the hissing water. At times he wept, in the merciless rush of the frozen gale. Occasionally he beat his feet on the splintered bottom of the boat in vain endeavors to keep out the frost that he felt creeping into them. And always he fought the sleep that numbed into his brain from the extremities of his body, for he knew that to yield meant death. Once in the lull of the wind, the swish of wings sounded close above his head, but he deafened his ears to it. He beat his hands on the gunwales of his broken boat until the blood came. But the numbness of the cold bit into them, and at last, pound as he might, he could feel nothing. Then he knew they were frozen.

But he paid little heed. He was past heeding. The lethargy of the cold held him in its coma. Little by little the consciousness of his surroundings left him and the wild night became blank, formless. Then at last it came—a great ball of fire that was blood red and very cold—the sun. Up over the edge of the pallid world of ice it stole and struck full upon a gray-haired man in a "scooter," standing erect and searching the waste of frozen water with anxious eyes.

The boy in the dugout lay close by and alone on the seemingly endless sweep of wind-whisked crystal. For the huddle of feathers was gone.

Two autumns came and went and then one late November day the sun slanting redly across the gray wastes of a broad, shallow bay fell into the eyes of a half-grown youth and an old man crouching behind a tuft of frozen beach grass on the shore of a crescent shaped cove in the beach. Between the stumps of wrists that served him as hands the youth held a square black box. The old man was looking into the void of the wind-swept distances—looking with a strange, eager intentness. Suddenly his hand went out and touched the sleeve of his companion.

"He's coming, son," he said quietly.

Instantly the youth looked up, following the direction indicated. Far distant a pin point of shadow pricked the dull sweep of sky. Quickly it became the head of a pin, and then a dark speck. In another moment they could see the long hooked wings fanning swiftly on either side of it.

"It's him," said the youth.

The man nodded. Then both sank low behind the grass as a long, sloping head, reddish with the color of bricks, and behind it the body of a huge drake canvasback, bored into their visions.

A bare instant they waited breathless; then as the big bird flared sharply, the cold gleam of the sun striking white across it, the youth leaped to his feet, the camera leveled. His eyes were bent to the ground-glass finder. Snap! There was a lightning flash of steel as the shutter clicked, and a quick low cry—half of pleasure, half of pity, and the boy smiled up into the old man's wrinkled face.

"Got him that time, poor old cuss," he said gently. "Clear and sharp as lightning on the finder, Uncle Eb."

The old man chuckled. "It's great how a feller can shoot his game with one of those picture boxes and then keep on shooting it over again every fall." And Uncle Eb chuckled again.

"Yes," said the boy, "we'll have him feeling his way in here through the sky to pose for us again, in another season."

Then a shadow fell across his face and he added: "If he don't stop off along the flight somewhere—for good."

# The Golden Lady

BY HORACE HAZELTINE

Author of "Cynthia's Find," etc

TRENWITH, being an adopted son of Albion, drank tea every afternoon at five. During his enforced stay in New York, whither he had been called, much against his will, to take part in the final settlement of his millionaire father's estate, he drank it, usually, at his club, gazing scornfully through his monocle meanwhile at those who preferred beverages less innocuous. But this afternoon was an exception. Contrary to his custom, he had accepted an invitation to a tea at Mrs. Courtland Van Vindt's—had, indeed, accepted it eagerly; had gone early and was staying unconscionably late. All of which delighted his hostess, extremely, seeing that Trenwith was something of a social lion, who hitherto had proved himself most difficult to snare.

That the young man was inspired by some motive other than mere preference, in thus singling the Van Vindt function for attendance, would probably have suggested itself to a person less proudly self-centered than this regal mistress of distinguished colonial ancestry. The fact was that Trenwith was in search of a certain fair unknown, and that the Van Vindt tea offered what appeared to him as the most promising hunting-ground.

It was now well on to a week since, in his arduous labor of time killing, he had dropped in rather late one evening to the deserted Trenwith box at the Opera, to become instantly lifted from his enveloping *ennui*, not by the soulful tenor of Caruso or the superb soprano of Farrar, but by the surpassing beauty, grace, and charm of the solitary occupant of the box adjoining. It had seemed to him then—and the intervening days of reflection had tended only to deepen the impression—that the young lady of the spun gold tresses, topaz eyes, and marble white

shoulders, was quite the most deliriously enchanting creature his well-fixed monocle had ever focused.

She reminded him somewhat of the young Countess of Lessington, but she was far more lovely, with a loveliness, nevertheless, distinctly British. He had observed the American imitations often enough to distinguish the real from the spurious. He distinctly objected to the American type, no matter how well disguised by English residence and influence. There was absolutely nothing of the Yankee girl in this generously endowed paragon, whose every line and movement breathed Mayfair.

At the close of the performance he had hurried out and waited in the promenade to see her emerge; had waited until the house was empty and the lights were being extinguished, when he was forced to the understanding, that in some mysterious way she had eluded him, leaving him with no clue to her identity save that the box in which she had sat was that of the Courtlandt Van Vindts.

And now with what bored disinterest did he meet a score or more of women at this most stupid of afternoon teas! How he looked over their heads or across their shoulders, making inapposite replies or propounding inane questions the while, his gaze perpetually, unremittingly seeking her! Hope and despair had played see-saw with him the afternoon through. A glimpse of promise, pursuit, disappointment. That had been the order, until, well nigh discouraged, he had strolled abstractly off across the broad, darkly groined and fretted hall to find himself at the door of a library, rich with rare bindings and family portraits; but richer still for Trenwith, with a golden lady, sitting alone before a cheery fire of soft coals.

She wore a great feathered hat and a cloak of sable, but a gleam of late sunshine slanting down from a high window lighted her marble pale beauty so clearly that his recognition was certain beyond peradventure. It was his impulse to address her, but he was checked by recollection of the prescriptive introduction, and fled in haste for the needed assistance, which he found in a daughter of the house, who had already poured him four cups of tea.

"Oh, I'm so sorry," she exclaimed, as she saw him advancing, "there isn't a drop; but the butler's gone for more, if you don't mind waiting just for a moment."

Trenwith, however, smiled beatifically. Since there was no more tea to be poured just then, she could the more readily comply with his wish.

"That's jolly good of you," he told her; "but while I'm waiting, would you mind coming across the hall and presenting me to a girl that's sitting in the library? She's a perfectly ripping girl, you know, and I've been wanting to meet her, no end, ever since I saw her in your box at the opera last Friday night."

The tea pourer acquiesced cheerfully, and Trenwith fairly raced her to the library.

But when they reached it the room was empty.

"By gad!" he exclaimed in dismay, staring at the vacant chair before the fire, "she's hooked it."

"What a pity!" declared the Van Vindt maiden. "I was almost as anxious to find her as you were. You see, I know for a fact that our opera box should have been unoccupied on Friday night. We were going ourselves and only gave up the idea at the last moment; too late to turn it over to friend or foe."

Trenwith adjusted his monocle and regarded her most seriously.

"How extraordinary!" was his comment.

"Now, if you could describe her," she suggested, "I might be able to apply the description."

"Yes, yes," the young man approved. "Of course. She was, as I said, just ripping. You know the sort, I daresay; and

yet you couldn't know the sort, because, don't you see, she was quite—Oh, yes, quite different. She was—"

And as he sought for adequate terms, his gaze roved among the family portraits. Then, suddenly, with arm outstretched and finger excitedly pointed, he exclaimed:

"My word! That *is* extraordinary. There she is up there on the wall, and capitally done, too. I don't think I ever saw a better likeness."

But his companion laughed a little constrainedly.

"The lady in the Gainsborough hat?" she queried.

"Yes, and the sable cloak," he added, nodding affirmation, while his visage was one great pleading question mark.

"Why that," she told him, "is a collateral ancestress of ours who killed herself way back in Revolutionary days. She was a staunch Patriot and her lover was a Tory, and rather than marry him or live without him she plunged a poisoned dagger, or something, in her young heart. It's quite a thrilling story, and most romantic, too."

Of course Trenwith was too thoroughly modern and materialistic to believe in ghosts. The explanation was simple enough. The golden lady, as he had come to call her, was a Van Vindt who had inherited the beauty of this unfortunate belle of a century gone. He had no doubt, indeed, that the young woman he had questioned, knew this quite well, but had perversely refused to satisfy his curiosity because of personal envy, not unmixed, perhaps, with jealousy. Perseverance in his quest, he told himself, would surely be rewarded ere long. And since he was forced to linger in benighted New York, he was only too delighted to have found such an interesting means of employing his leisure.

Once again, on Friday night, he hopefully attended the opera, but the adjoining box this time was crowded with a boisterous company of Van Vindts and their friends, in which his lovely enslaver was not included. He escaped, therefore, after a very brief stay, and repaired to his club, where in solitary dejection he sat until a late hour.



Emerging at length, he discovered that a fine snow had begun to fall and that the sidewalks were already white with a thin layer of damp flakes. Nevertheless, since sleep seemed set upon flouting him, he determined to walk to his lodgings, which were located just off the avenue in the neighborhood of the Washington Arch—as nearly a counterpart of London lodgings as could be found anywhere in his native city.

His mind still busy with his problem, he had covered most of the distance and was swinging along the last block before his turning, when a taxicab shot by him and drew into the curb a few houses in advance of him. A street lamp, fortuitously placed, illuminated the scene with a sort of veiled brilliance, and as he came nearer he saw the door of the cab open and close and a feminine figure, well-wrapped, start trippingly across the snowy pavement towards the high brown stone stoop of one of the few remaining old mansions of that vicinity. And when midway he saw her slip, waver, lose her balance and fall.

With all promptitude Trenwith sped to the rescue, and with the strong arms of the crack bat at cricket which he was, he assisted her to her feet.

"Thank you—thank you, so much," she rewarded him in a voice marvelously sweet.

"I trust you're not hurt?" he solicitously inquired.

"I fear," she returned, "that I have twisted my ankle. If I may make so bold as to crave your further assistance, I shall esteem it a favor to be aided up the stoop."

He helped her with delight, experiencing the while a strange exaltation of spirit, inspired, he fancied, by the melody of her tone and the delicious harmony of her accent, which was gratefully British.

As if someone had been in waiting to give them entrance, the house door opened for them, and Trenwith, at the lady's bidding, entered with her, led her across the hall, and into a tapestry hung drawing room, where a half dozen candles, burning dimly in wall sconces, bathed the scene in a weird half light.

Releasing his arm, the lady sank upon a sofa near the door, and as she did so, her cloak slipped from her shoulders and she lifted her veil. Trenwith, moved beyond power of repression, uttered a glad cry of recognition.

It was his golden lady.

She raised her eyes in affright, and at sight of the young man's face her natural pallor deepened, and for a moment she stared at him in speechless terror. Then, with a wild shriek she sprang up.

"I cannot, I will not marry you!" she cried, hysterically. "You are a traitor to the land of your birth. Though I love you, I will rather die rather than wed one so disloyal."

He saw her slender hand raised. He saw something glitter in the pale light of the flickering candles. He saw it flash downward and disappear amid the folds of her waist, and then with a wild scream, he saw her fall backward.

At the same moment the candles were snuffed out as by a gust of wind, and Trenwith, in a sudden spasm of horror, fled gropingly from the room and from the house.

He found a policeman at the corner of his own street, and addressed him excitedly.

"A lady—down the block—has killed herself. Come! Come with me, quickly."

Together they returned in all haste. When they reached the stoop and Trenwith was about to ascend, the officer checked him.

"Not there?" he said, questioningly.

"Yes, yes. In here! Come!"

"Man alive, you're either drunk or crazy," commented the policeman, refusing to move. "Can't you see there are no floors laid in the building yet? It's the old Van Vindt mansion they're turnin' into offices and lofts. Nobody had lived in the house for years, because it was haunted. Maybe you never read the story in a Sunday paper, a month or so back, as to how, in Washington's time it was, a Miss Van Vindt stabbed herself to death in there rather than marry a spallpeen named Trenwith, who was a spy and a traitor in league with the hated British!"



"Go on" breathed the girl, amazed at his accuracy

## The Triumph of "Toothbrush"

BY NEWTON A. FUESSLE

ILLUSTRATED BY GORDON STEVENSON

**T**OOTHBRUSH" did not belong on a hook between the razor-strop and the wash-rag. He was, on the contrary, a gentleman of much dignity and learning. He was a scholar and a violinist. He knew the moods of Spinoza and the fugues of Bach. He was versed, versatile, and voracious for accomplishments ranging from the most difficult system of feather-bowing to the art of making Kant's "Critique" intelligible to the proletariat. He could read ladies' palms, could sip Hyson at pink teas in the most approved Fifth Avenue fashion, could discuss anything from Corot to crops, could play bridge, could talk New Thought.

At Mrs. Finley's select boarding-house on West Forty-ninth Street "Tooth-

brush" received the baptismal, nomenclatural immersion which gave him his odd and homely nick-name. As "Professor Tierney" he was introduced by Mrs. Finley on the evening he followed her timidly into the dining room. Within a week, a number of the boarders were calling him "Prof." Before long an inspired boarder, with a penchant for drollery, expanded "Prof" into "Prophylactic." And from that weird appellation it was but a short and logical step to "Toothbrush."

Imagine a man standing five feet two in his yellow oxfords, wearing striped trousers, a greenish, shabby, strugglingly genteel frock-coat, a cream colored vest, a wistful smile. His eyes were mystic and dreamy and of a blue that would almost

have made you sea-sick. His hair was long, stringy, yellow. It gave him the appearance of standing in a perpetual shower of rain. Upon his head he wore a tile. Altogether he looked not unlike the professor who had just stepped out of the fairy-tale. In the Latin Quarter of Paris one would never have given him a second glance, so perfectly would he have fitted into the picture. On polyglot Broadway, however, where disguises are the shibboleth of panhandlers, the wary might have kept their hands on their watches and followed the little stranger's hands. On Broadway, too, where actors of an early vintage make the rounds of theatrical managers' offices, along with sleek young Thespians of to-day, he might have been identified as one of those players, adjectived "ham."

At the West Forty-ninth Street boarding-house, many varieties of humanity had been pork-and-beaned and lodged. Many a subsequent Sultana of Stageland had sojourned there. At Mrs. Finley's a now famous playwright had run up a memorable board bill in the days when he was without purse or script. And at Mrs. Finley's, more than once, had failure and heart-break led young men and women to short-circuit themselves into that Land-Around-the-Corner and thus cause another disturbance of the sod and a paragraph in the newspapers ending with: "Ohio papers please copy."

And therefore when little "Tooth-brush" bowed to the assembled diners on the evening of his debut at Mrs. Finley's, tucked the end of his napkin under his collar, and began crumbling crackers into his consommé, there was not a great deal of commotion among the boarders.

Mr. Clarence Sartwell, the sole owner of a correspondence school of scientific beautifications and the acknowledged wag of the Finley establishment, leaned over to Miss Virginia Holyoke, the art student, and whispered: "I wonder if there's a meadow-lark in his hair?" Miss Holyoke acknowledged the witticism with a smile, and replied that she was sure she didn't know.

"Funny-looking gink, aint he?" whispered another boarder to Jimmie Grant of the *Evening Tribune*.

Still another, a player of the ponies, gave the newcomer but a scant glance, divining that he possessed more gray matter than green, and dived back into his pink racing extra.

That evening Miss Holyoke sank into a creaky rocking chair on the stoop and opened at the book-mark her Lenox Library copy of a current best-seller. Mr. Clarence Sartwell had a theatre engagement with a girl cousin who was visiting New York, and Jimmie Grant, the reporter, had gone on a special night assignment somewhere over in Jersey. It was for these two reasons that Miss Holyoke and the creaking rocking-chair were the sole occupants of the stoop.

It was with a sigh that she had opened her book. Fifty per-cent of the sigh was satisfaction, and fifty per-cent regret. For the correspondence school magnate had long since diminished into a bore, and had latterly dwindled into a pest. The reporter, on the contrary, had made her interest in him deepen into solid friendship as the months rolled by.

Virginia Holyoke was twenty-two, and I will leave her to your imagination. Only, I will say this—health, and red cheeks, and neatly rounded ankles, and ambition, and courage, and a wealth of copper-colored hair, and eyes of brown, are beautiful, and she had all of these.

From the day Jimmie Grant first saw her, he had been burning up with a desire to place upon her third finger left a "best investment" and to lead her triumphantly to the altar. Her manner toward him, however, was sprightly, friendly, evasive, non-committal. And the longer he languished in uncertainty, the more determined he became to annex a mother-in-law and all the excess baggage a matrimonial hazard might involve. His salary—as Park Row salaries go—was good, and as the months of his enslavement advanced, he managed to deflect many a deposit into the savings bank against that hoped-for day when he might begin paying rent for a flat in Harlem and buying kitchen utensils.

Jimmy had argued his cause valiantly, and as valiantly had Virginia defended herself against benefit of clergy. To begin with, she had come to New York,

she said, to study drawing, not to lend herself to domestic tasks. But her suitor had detected a tinkle in her voice and a twinkle in her eye when she said it, and therefore he had lent himself more resolutely to his suit.

One night, as they were strolling home from a boat-ride in Central Park, there was a Riviera-like something in the air and necromancy of moonlight a-plenty, which somehow made her let him kiss her. That was certainly a score for Jimmie. Then, womanlike, she handed him a prize package of reproof for being a newspaper man, with all the stealing of pictures, rustling of interviews under false pretenses, and kindred inelegant and unchurchly chores for city editors which newspaper work involves. This was where Miss Virginia scored. And before they arrived at the *Maison* Finley, the girl had shot so many holes into the profession of a reporter that thereafter, for a month, Jimmie dared essay no further conversation *in re* a license to wed.

Having thus established her defense, Virginia, by way of a follow-up system, sent many a keen-pointed dart at Jimmie. And a cruel delight she took in so doing. On his return home, evenings, she would frequently ask: "How many lies did you tell to-day, Mr. Grant?" or "Did you steal any pictures to-day from women or children?" or "How many poor *divorcées* did you bombard with fresh questions to-day?" And one night, when Jimmie wounded his finger, drawing blood, while fixing a piece of broken metal on Virginia's trunk, she said: "It's too bad you didn't have your hand protected with a strip of your reporter's conscience."

So much for ancient history. Half a chapter of her novel had Virginia read that evening, when she heard a step behind her on the stoop, looked around, and beheld little "Toothbrush." He bowed with the grandeur of an Elizabethan courtier.

"Good evening," said Virginia pleasantly, "wont you sit down?"

"I thank you," said the little man, dropping into a rocker near hers, and letting one thin leg, enveloped in its shiny, shabby, striped trouser, dangle over the other.

"You seem to be a happy family here," he ventured. "This neighborhood holds many a charming memory for me. Years ago I lived in the next block. Those days I had a studio down in Union Square."

"A studio?" replied the girl with growing interest. "Then you are an artist?"

"In a sense, yes. I scrape the fiddle."

"Oh, I just love the violin!" declared the girl, impulsively. "Will you play for us sometime?" she asked eagerly.

"I should be happy to," said the professor. "I fancy you are an art student," he said abruptly.

"Yes, at the Art Students' League. How did you ever guess?"

"From the shape of your hands, your eyes, and the tone of your question."

"How strange," murmured the girl, closing her open book and composing herself to listen.

"Let me look at your hand," he said, reaching for it with the frank assurance of his five and forty years. Virginia obeyed, propped her left elbow upon her knee, placed her palm under her chin, and leaned forward with pretty expectation.

"You inherit your love of art from your mother," spoke the revealer of secrets. "You care little for form or modeling. But you have a passion for color. You look first of all for color in a picture, in literature, in landscape, in everything."

"Go on," breathed the girl, amazed at his accuracy.

As the little man talked on, his pale, mystic eyes seemed to X-ray the girl's soul. There was something uncanny about it all, something incomprehensible to her. He told her of events in her life which made her gasp with astonishment. With deadly accuracy he read her character, her temperament, her very foibles. The queer little stranger seemed to know her better than she had ever known herself. The two sat conversing until after the last hurdy-gurdy in the neighborhood had ground out "Rings on Her Fingers and Bells on Her Toes," and the rest of the *répertoire* of those wandering troubadours who disgust, delight, and derange Manhattan.



"Tell me of yourself," the girl said at last. And "Toothbrush" recounted the story of how for years he had been teaching in Rochester, Wellsville, and Olean, all the while perfecting himself in his art, with the hope that some day he might obtain a booking in vaudeville. The fabulous salaries paid to artists in that branch of "the profession" had made the cosmos of "Toothbrush" tingle, and to appear in vaudeville had become his fetish. There was something almost pathetic about his yearning to get into the "big time," and as he talked on, the girl, who was not unacquainted with the hazards of the varieties and who felt many misgivings, let her whole heart go out to the blue-eyed, gentle-voiced, tousle-haired little violinist.

And when she bade him good-night, she gave him her hand with the sweet cordiality of an old friendship.

"Tell me about Professor Goldilocks," said Jimmie Grant to Virginia the fol-

lowing evening. "I hear you've been holding a *séance* with him."

Virginia sang the praises of her new friend with vigor and enthusiasm. "He is thinking of going into vaudeville," she concluded.

"Vaudeville, eh?" returned the reporter. "He has a slim chance of putting anything over in the line of a violin stunt. It's as hard for a straight violinist to break in as it is for the traditional rich man to negotiate the journey to Heaven. It's a case of the camel and the eye of a needle, and then some. Now, if your man could scrape his fiddle while standing on his head on a trapeze, with one hand tied behind him and the other lighting a pipe, it would be different."

"Mr. Grant, how you talk!" interrupted Virginia.

The scribe acknowledged the reproof with a word of apology and continued: "My dear little painter-person, you have no idea what it means to break into vaudeville. I have seen classy actors hang

around the booking offices until the clothes on their backs were literally in rags and finally they were forced to take a job lugging a hod or juggling hash for a living. And these were folks who had been making good in the legit., who knew the game, and who had been cavorting in the festive spot-light for years. It takes fifty per-cent of genuine genius and fifty per-cent of sheer luck to get near these kings of vaudeville. I don't want to drop anything like a wet blanket on little 'Toothbrush,' but he'd better take my advice and hie himself back to Reubenville and give up the



He submitted to the drudgery the violin demands



He played the Vieuxtemps "Fantasie"

notion of rivaling trained dogs and moving pictures."

Virginia cast an intolerant eye at her companion, and began at once to challenge and defend.

"Don't you dare to talk to *him* like that," she exclaimed. "He's going to win. I just know he is. There's something about him that just makes you like him the moment you begin to know him. He has had a hard life, and he *deserves* to succeed. He has courage and he can play, and now don't you go discouraging him!"

That night Virginia prevailed upon "Toothbrush" to get out his fiddle, and in the parlor, with half a dozen selected boarders present, he played. It did not take many strokes of his bow to convince Virginia that his was a great talent. He played the Vieuxtemps "Fantasie," then ran through the "Legende" of Wieniawski. Then, in response to a burst of applause he muted the strings and played Dvorak's "Humoresque." Virginia had heard Fritz Kreisler, Mischa Elman, and

the great Ysaye, but to-night she listened with greater attention than ever before. When he was through, she congratulated the player with the warmth of amazed satisfaction.

Weeks went by, and a month. Daily the little man would enter the dining room with a hesitant timidity, bow to the assembled diners, tuck the corner of his napkin under his chin, and crumb crackers into his soup. And daily he closed the door of his third-floor room, ran through fingering exercises, and submitted to the drudgery which the tyrannical violin demands of him whom it has enslaved. And every day Virginia prayed for his success as he went forth to invade the lairs of the booking-agents.

She divined with her woman's intuition that he was receiving the rebuffs of office menials, and was being denied even the opportunity to play at the weekly "try-outs." To have tried-out before a brutal judge-advocate of vaudeville, amid the racket of carpenters' hammers and the



Spoke Jimmie truthfully: "It worked"

yelping of packs of theatrical hounds, would have made even Paganini play like a blacksmith. But even this slender chance was to "Toothbrush," without friends or influence, forbidden.

To Virginia he seemed to be growing pale and emaciated. If only she could do something to help him! But what?

One day she had an inspiration. "Mr. Grant," she said, as she and Jimmie engaged in conversation that evening, "I'm just dying to do something to help that poor little professor. He's getting pale and thin, is losing his appetite, and is an entirely different man."

"What's the matter with him?" asked Grant. "Has he fallen in love?"

"You know as well as I do what's the matter," she replied with vigor. "He can't get into vaudeville. He lacks friends and pull. I'm afraid it will break his heart if he fails. His heart has been set upon it for so long."

"I said in the first place," rejoined Jimmie, "that I estimated his chances at about one in 29,000,000 to cut in among the Thespians. He belongs out among the hay-tedders and self-binders. No doubt he's down to his last traditional dime.

I'm afraid we'll have to levy an assessment to pay the freight on him back to home and mother."

"Mr. Grant!" exclaimed Virginia, for lo, the inspiration, already referred to, smote her at that moment.

"Present!" responded the youth, startled by her outburst.

"Listen," she continued: "I wonder if you couldn't help him, somehow, by putting something in the papers about him. Haven't lots of folks been brought into prominence because the newspapers published things deliberately contrived to make them famous?"

"Press-agent him, eh?" answered Grant.

"That's it. Advertising—that's what he needs! Think of it! If every newspaper in town would print something startling about him, and use his picture! Why, those vaudeville people would simply beg him to sign a contract!"

"You grieve me, Miss Holyoke," said Jimmie in his most mournful tones. "So you actually ask me to start a fake story about him, deceive the dear public, and trap the vaudeville people! As if there were not enough crooked work in the newspaper business already! And that you should propose such a thing—you, of all others, who have so often called me to account because of playing the newspaper game in its prevalent unchurchly manner!"

"But can't you see," persisted Virginia, "that this is different? The end in this case would more than justify the means. Remember that the happiness, the very life perhaps, of that poor little man are at stake. It can't hurt anybody, what I ask. He plays as well, if not better, than anybody in vaudeville to-day. We

would only be doing for him what somebody else does for every other actor and actress in the country. This is an *age* of advertising."

"You ought to be on some correspondence school faculty," said Jimmie. "I verily believe that you have missed your calling."

In the end, of course, Virginia won; and Jimmie agreed to execute one of the most startling newspaper fakes in the history of Park Row. He would set a new pace for the saffron journalists. "Toothbrush" would be famed and booked. There would be nothing to it.

Virginia gushed with gratitude. Jimmie, under the circumstances, did a very natural thing. He put his arm around her and kissed her. She let him. For the stoop, save for themselves, was deserted, and it was night in New York.

The following evening Jimmie and the violinist took a stroll up Fifth Avenue. Jimmie unfolded his plan. When they returned to Mrs. Finley's, Jimmie unfolded the plan to Virginia. And again she permitted an osculatory demonstration.

The following day the *Evening Tribune* scored a "beat" on every paper in town. On its front page was the picture of the long-haired little violinist. The headlines over the story were large

enough to accommodate even the waning eye-sight of the aged without the use of a reading-glass.

You who live in New York and read the story remember it well. For the benefit of those dwelling in remoter parts let me recite the principal features of the tale.

Vladimir Bourtseff, the famous Russian revolutionist, and the latter-day Sherlock Holmes, who had unmasked ninety odd government spies, who had gained admission into the secret councils of the revolutionists, and who had just arrived in New York on a secret mission, was there, according to facts dug up by an enterprising reporter for the *Evening Tribune*, to unmask a spy known in New York by the name of Professor Tierney, violin virtuoso, concert favorite, etc., etc. If convicted of treason to the revolutionists, he would be read out of the party, posted as a traitor, and in all probability assassinated.

In Moscow and St. Petersburg had the violinist studied. There he had been won over to the cause of the Czar's agents, and his orders had then carried him to all the musical centers of Europe, where, under various names, in the guise of a revolutionist, he had gained admittance into the inner circles of student revolutionists. Suspected at length as a spy, he had disappeared. Word had promptly



The day the contract was signed Virginia promised Jimmy she would marry him



been flashed to the members of the party throughout the world. The great Bourtsess himself had been bending every effort to expose him as a traitor. At last he had been discovered in New York, in a West Forty-ninth Street boarding-house!

It was the kind of story which city editors love. Like wild fire it flew into the columns next day of every other journal in the city. Reporters in scores sought "Toothbrush" and interviewed him.

Before the end of the week every vaudeville manager in town had sent for "Toothbrush." He was wise, and let them wait. So they grew insistent. At length he let them call, and heard their offers, but the offers he rejected. What, risk his life by public appearance for five hundred a week? No, it wouldn't be worth while. So the managers raised their antes. At last he signed. The newspaper accounts stated that the *virtuoso* was going to take the daring chance of being assassinated by some revolutionist in the vaudeville audience. Three of the papers declared that he was to draw five thousand dollars a week for playing. A few said ten thousand. You may take your choice.

The day the contract was signed Virginia promised Jimmie Grant that she would marry him.

A few nights later, "Toothbrush" stood brushing his hair in the star's dressing-room of one of the biggest New York vaudeville theatres. He was waiting for the electric bell which would denote that he was due on the stage in five minutes. He was clad in faultlessly fitting evening broadcloth and a large acreage of white shirt-front. Jimmie Grant, the reporter, was with him.

Spoke Jimmie, triumphantly: "It worked. The little lady told me last night that I might purchase the license."

"I congratulate you," said the player, wringing the other's hand. "That girl is an angel."

"Right," said Jimmie.

"What's on your mind?" asked the "revolutionist." "You look worried."

"I am. I don't know whether I ought to let her marry me like this, under false pretenses, you know. I don't know but

that I ought to tell her the whole plot. What do you suppose she'd do if I confessed that I knew all along you were a crack violinist with a big reputation who could break into this vaudeville thing for the asking; that I told you all about Virginia that night at the Press Club so you'd be able to read her hand and get in strong; that I imported you to the boarding-house and got you to gain her sympathy so that she'd ask me to pull off that press gag to get you into the lime-light, giving me the chance to demonstrate to her that the newspaper business, which she despised, could be used for praiseworthy purposes? Do you think she'd stand for it? Or do you think she'd throw me over?"

"My son," said "Toothbrush," "you don't have to tell her anything of the kind. We didn't deceive her to speak of at all. It's true I told you at the Club that I was the latter-day Paganini with the fiddle and that they'd break their necks to star me in vaudeville. Well, I was stringing you. As a matter of fact I've never played outside of Rochester, Wellsville, and Olean, in my life. And if it hadn't been for you and Virginia, I'd be walking the ties back in that direction now."

Before the astounded Jimmie could reply, the electric bell above them exploded, the door opened and the manager thrust in his head. He was anxious, serious, and apparently frightened. The reputation of the house was at stake. He looked "Toothbrush" over from patent leather pumps to the rainy hair. He seemed satisfied. He led the violinist around to the left entrance to the stage.

"Got your nerve?" he whispered. "Good. When the curtain goes down on this sketch, the music starts, and when it stops, that is your cue—see? We've got every part of the house covered with guards, so don't worry. There aint a chance on earth of any of them anarchists startin' somethin'."

Up went the curtain. The orchestra stopped. "Toothbrush" walked out upon the stage with a smile. There was a crash of wild applause. His artistic triumph was complete. He was done with Wellsville forever.



Photograph by White, New York

George Backus as *John Emerson*, DeWitt C. Jennings as *Giles Raymond*, George Nash as *Wilbur Emerson*, Cecil Kingstone as *Frederick Tooker*, and William B. Mack as *George Cowper*, in the first act of "The Gamblers," Charles Klein's new play

IN a season largely monopolized by plays imported from the foreign stage which reflect nearly every manner and form of life except our own, and by the doubtful experiments of untried authors which too frequently do not deal with a recognizable form of life at all, the production of a real drama on a live contemporary theme by a native playwright of ripe experience is an event of paramount interest. Such a playwright is Mr. Charles Klein, and such a drama is "The Gamblers"—which has been quick to entrench itself both in popular favor and critical esteem. When the record of the theatrical year is complete this moving, gripping, vital play will be sure to have won a place among its most successful accomplishments.

The title may be a trifle misleading. The gamblers to whom Mr. Klein pays his respects are not petty dabblers in the game of chance but mighty manipulators of finance, the field of whose operations is Wall Street. To this extent he again seeks to turn the stage into a searchlight directed against ourselves—one of the legitimate functions of the theatre.

His formula now, as in the past, is to point a moral as well as adorn a tale, but this time he does not fall into the error of preaching a sermon at the expense of telling a human and convincing story. The form he employs is frank melodrama. Accordingly he paints his characters in vivid colors. But they are veraciously drawn and their actions are generally in keeping with plausible human conduct. Respect is paid to the logic of circumstance. Common-sense is not sacrificed for the sake of theatrical situation or a happy ending.

Any play which observes these dramatic virtues is bound to exert a strong emotional appeal upon its audiences. So "The Gamblers" meets the purpose of the theatre despite the fact that it makes no pretense as literature. However, the writing is effective enough. It is only the absence of a literary touch which denies it the higher distinction attained by the dramas of Mr. Augustus Thomas. On the other hand, Mr. Thomas never manipulated the mechanics of the theatre with riper technical skill.

With no preliminary exposition the

vital complications begin abruptly with the rise of the curtain when *James Darwin* appears during the progress of a party at the home of the *Emersons*, a family of influential bankers, to insist that his wife, *Kate*, leave forthwith. In response to her demand for an explanation he makes it clear that the *Emersons*, especially *Wilbur*, the son who is in executive control of the family interests, are under suspicion of juggling with the Federal banking law by using the funds of depositors for private speculation, and that he has been retained by the Attorney General to conduct the government's prosecution. *Darwin* is spurred by more than professional zeal for he has political aspirations and is hostile to *Wilbur Emerson*, whom he knows once loved *Mrs. Darwin* and whom he suspects of having a guilty understanding with her.

The true state of affairs at the bank is explained almost immediately when the directors meet in the smoking-room, while the party is going on, under pretense of a game of cards, to discuss the crisis which confronts them and devise a means of escape. The elder *Emerson*, a financier of the conservative old school, has placed every confidence in his son's integrity but *Wilbur* explains his "pyramiding" operations and admits the danger in which his associates stand, but announces that he has recovered from the bank's vaults certain documents essential to the government's case. On examination these papers prove to be copies. One of the directors has turned traitor to gain immunity and from him *Wilbur* forces a confession that the original notes are in *Darwin's* house while *Darwin*, himself, has just started for Washington. To regain these documents and thus shield his aged father becomes *Wilbur's* aim. It is also his only loophole of escape from a prison term.

In the next act the desperate young banker takes this dangerous chance. It is midnight and *Mrs. Darwin* has turned out the lights in the library and retired to her own room. Muffled in a chauffeur's overcoat, *Wilbur* gains an entrance into the house and is rummaging in the lawyer's desk when he is overheard and surprised by the wife. She snatches up the papers, thrusts them into her dress and

vehemently expresses her contempt for the man but finally listens to his appeal, in the course of which he acknowledges the whole truth. Then follows a series of strong situations which are handled by the playwright with the greatest skill. *Emerson* puts himself completely at the woman's mercy, imploring her to remember their earlier affection yet treating her with the utmost respect. She admits that she is no longer in sympathy with her husband but proclaims that she must remain loyal to his interests and turns a deaf ear to *Wilbur's* appeals.

Had *Mrs. Darwin* yielded to the sentimental weakness of her sex which is the ordinary stock-in-trade of the melodramatist, the play from this point would have descended to the level of the commonplace. But Mr. Klein keeps the fiber of his heroine firm. And she continues firm when *Darwin*, who has been warned at the railroad station of *Emerson's* movements by the secret-service agents who have been on the watch, appears suddenly and hotly charges her with faithlessness. She meets these unfounded accusations with dignified calm while *Wilbur*, frankly admitting the thieving mission of his visit, defends the wife's good name. She maintains her composure until *Darwin* threatens divorce proceedings when she passionately declares that she is willing to be dragged through any scandal if only it will gain her freedom from her distasteful marriage. There is not much revenge in prospect for *Darwin* in this direction but his charge of burglary against *Wilbur* seems good and the man is led away to jail.

The events of the last act take place on the following morning. The young banker, having been released on bail, is back at his own house where the bank directors in their anxiety have been waiting all night. To them he explains that his own case is hopeless and that, as only his name is on the telltale notes, they may escape prosecution by throwing all the guilt on his shoulders. Thus he will be able to shield his aged father from the law's revenge. The plan has just been agreed upon when *Mrs. Darwin*, convinced that her husband's accusations of faithlessness have relieved her from every obligation to him, appears and places in *Wilbur's*



Photograph by White, New York  
Miss Jane Cowl as *Kate Darwin*, Charles Stevenson as *James Darwin* and George Nash as *Wilbur Emerson* in the second act of "*The Gambler* "



hands the papers which he intended to steal. To her surprise he turns them over to *Darwin* and thus insures the success of the lawyer's case. But he has the satisfaction of hearing from the woman's lips that, freed from *Darwin*, she will be waiting for him when the prison doors swing open and he is once more a free man.

There will be no failure to detect in "The Gamblers" that sympathy for its characters has been cunningly and intentionally misplaced. *Wilbur Emerson*, whose criminal violation of the national banking law is acknowledged, is the hero of the play and upon him the sentimental interest of the audience rests, while *James Darwin*, the lawyer, who has committed no crime and whose motives, although vindictive, are professionally justified, is made the villain. The elder *Emerson* is made to appear as a banker of integrity although before the law he is as culpable as his son. The other directors are equally implicated but are permitted, neverthe-

less, to escape punishment for their acts. No blemish rests upon *Mrs. Darwin*, but even in her case the suspicion of her husband is partly justified by circumstantial evidence. In a broader view the drama teaches a moral lesson because well-understood practices in "high finance" are condemned and the chief offender is punished. None of these considerations, pro or con, harm the artistic value of the work. From start to finish it is a fine, gripping play, no incident in which could not easily have occurred in real life.

And it is brilliantly acted. Miss Jane Cowl as *Mrs. Darwin* gives a performance conspicuous for its womanly dignity, firm resolution and intense but repressed feeling. In the rôle of the lawyer Mr. Charles A. Stevenson builds a persuasive ideal of cold vindictiveness, relentless persistency and mental alertness. Mr. George Nash as the younger *Emerson* does his part vividly and with emotional power. The characters of the bank president and the directors are limned clearly by Mr. George C. Backus, Mr. DeWitt C. Jennings, Mr. William B. Mack and Mr. Cecil Kingstone. Any of these characters and some of the lesser ones might have stepped out of real life into the play.

AMONG the distinguished representatives of the foreign stage who are now paying professional visits to this country are Mr. Fred Terry, a younger brother of the renowned Ellen, and his beautiful wife, Miss Julia Neilson, who have come from London with a company of their own to act in "The Scarlet Pimpernel," a French Revolution melodrama of the most virulently romantic type in which they have been appearing continuously at home during the last five years, and in which, considering its out-moded character, they have had almost unexplainable success.

As many as four years ago, when writing from London of the English stage for THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE, I encountered this gilded melodramatic freak but did not describe it in much detail because it seemed absurdly out-of-date. Even then had not Mr. Edward H. Sothorn sheathed his trusty rapier and had not Mr. James K. Hackett desisted from butchering Terrorists single-handed?



Photo by Ellis & Walery, London  
Mr. Fred Terry in "The Scarlet Pimpernel"



Photograph by Ellis & Walery, London

Miss Julia Neilson as *Marguerite de Valois* in "Henry of Navarre"

The popularity at home of this handsomely costumed straggler from the romantic stage of ten years ago is due, I believe, to its naïve obviousness. No British mind is so dense that it could not penetrate the mazes of the general plot in a twinkling. There are some incidental situations which may be a bit confusing, but they are due to the fact that "The Scarlet Pimpernel" is not an original drama but a patched-up version of a novel by the Baroness Orczy.

I imagine that playgoers who made the acquaintance of Mr. Terry and Miss Neilson fourteen years ago when they

first came to this country as subordinate members of Sir John Hare's comedy company would much prefer seeing them in their old style of work, but they will never have the chance. Both are now dyed-in-the-wool, scenery-eating, romantic players. Their method has taken on all the airs and artificialities of the highly-colored characters they are now accustomed to impersonate. Perhaps this very artificiality is valuable to their present work—at any rate it makes them picturesque and satisfying to the eye.

"The Scarlet Pimpernel"—the sobriquet comes from a little English

flower that changes its colors—is *Sir Percy Blakeney*, a gallant British baronet engaged in the exciting work of rescuing French loyalists from the Reign of Terror in Paris and spiriting them to safety in England. He follows this reckless pastime purely out of love of adventure. Since he has a habit of changing his disguise with every new enterprise and is forever popping up in unexpected places to confound his pursuers and escape by the skin of his teeth, he becomes both famed and feared as a mysterious creature of phenomenal resource and superhuman daring. Even *Lady Blakeney*, the "*Pimpernel's*" wife from whom he is partly estranged, does not know his identity or the nature of his business. It is, in fact, this ignorance which leads to her unwitting betrayal of him that supplies

the basis of the story. *Lady Blakeney* is a French woman by birth who has learned that her brother, the *Count de Tournai*, has been marked as a victim of the guillotine. She has also come into the knowledge that the "*Scarlet Pimpernel*" is to appear at a grand ball in London as the clock strikes midnight and this last information she sells to *Chauvelin*, an agent of the Terrorists who has been set on the "*Pimpernel's*" track, in return for a promise of her brother's release.

The "*Pimpernel*" turns up at the ball as promised but again eludes his pursuers though *Chauvelin* discovers his identity. At the same time he hears of the *Count de Tournai's* danger and sets out post-haste to rescue him, now with the Terrorist agent on his track. It is not until after his departure that *Lady Blake-*



Photograph by White, New York

Horace James as the *Mayor*, Daniel Sullivan as the *coal dealer*, Scamp Montgomery as the *bus-driver*

ney realizes she has betrayed her own husband for the sake of her brother. Instantly she follows him to France to undo the mischief she has wrought.

Again the "*Pimpernel*" is triumphant. In a low sailors' inn at Calais he not only rescues the *Count*, who is in the hands of a mob of ruffianly Revolutionists, but saves the life of his wife who is also their captive. Then, dashing pepper into the eyes of his assailants, he bears both off in safety to England.

This story of amazing adventure may seem a bit transparent to sophisticated lovers of the stage and so, indeed, it becomes in the acting. The representation is chiefly interesting for the grandeur of the scenery and costumes, the perfect assumption of eighteenth century manners

by the cast and the neatness of the acting which extends even to the most insignificant members of the company. Mr. Horace Hodges as *Chauvelin*, a rather obvious villain, gives the best individual performance. Mr. Terry manages to be graceful and impressive and he plays his scenes of gallantry with dash. Miss Neilson makes a beautiful vision as *Lady Blakeney* but her acting is hard and artificial, and not calculated to stir a particle of real emotion in her audiences.

**A**LL the world—that is, in the theatre,—loves a crook. It revels in the heroics of the hounded bank thief. It sits in ecstatic contemplation of the chivalrous burglar. In its heart of hearts it lends its willing encouragement to the gentleman-



Frederick Maynard as the real-estate agent, Frederick Seaton as the town capitalist and Hale Hamilton as *J. Kyns Wallingford* in "*Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford*"





Photograph by White, New York

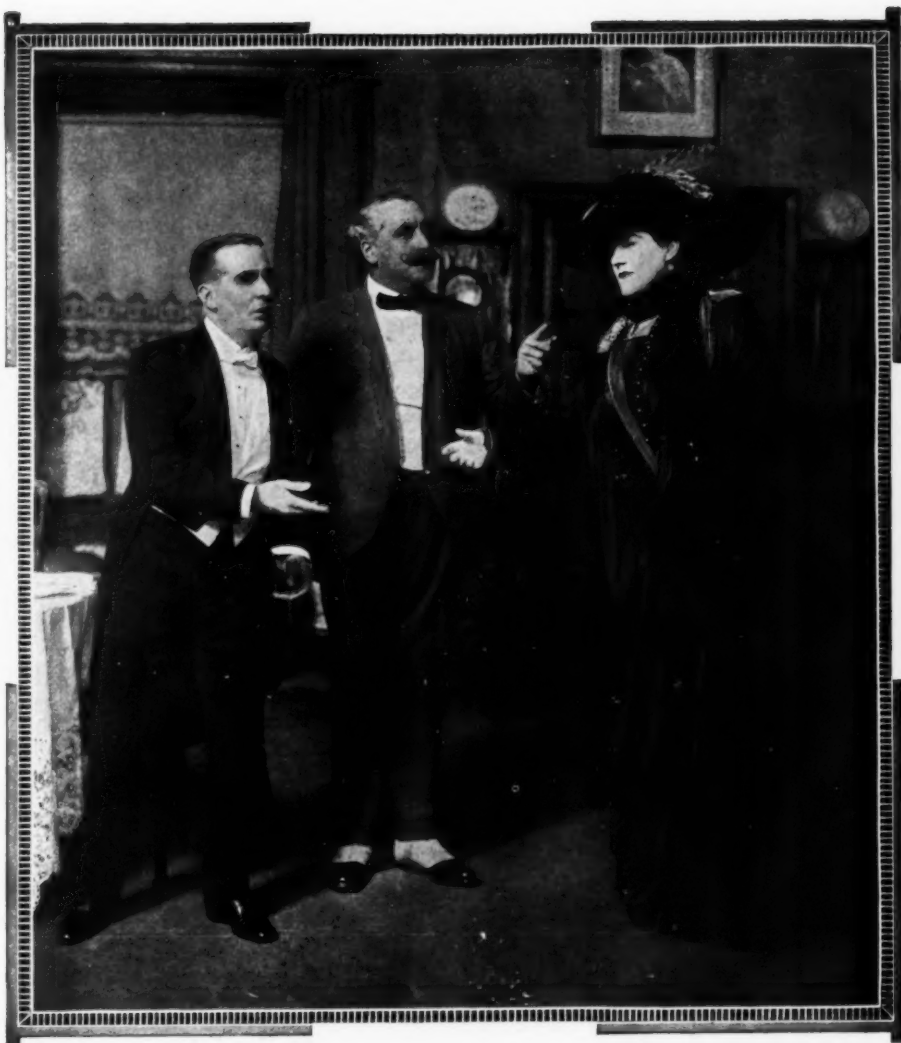
Miss Grace Goodall as *Bessie Meers*; Funnell Pratt as *Clint Harkins*; Miss Frances Ring as *Fannie Jasper*, and Hale Hamilton as *J. Rufus Wallingford*; in George M. Cohan's new comedy "Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford" based on the stories of George Randolph Chester

ly check raiser. Mind you, I am writing not of life but of the theatre. And now, to that great coterie of beloved rascals which includes *Jimmy Valentine*, *Raffles* and *Arsene Lupin*, are added *J. Rufus Wallingford* and *Horace Daw* for our adoration and delight. These two slick and entertaining confidence-men are no mere retail rascallions. They do business on a wholesale basis. And from the moment they breeze into the scene in "Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford," their hold on the interest of their audience is firm and sure.

The play is by Mr. George M. Cohan, who has taken two of Mr. George Randolph Chester's clever stories as its basis. They are the tales of the cloth-covered carpet tack and of the traction franchise, and the neat way in which he has joined them into a single plot is quite noteworthy. I am glad for this chance to pay my respects to Mr. Cohan's handiwork for I have never been able, in the past, to see much humor in his slap-dash musical

pieces. Anyone who cannot get an evening of capital entertainment out of this lively farce, however, had better see a doctor at once.

The play proceeds on the late P. T. Barnum's theory that half the public likes to be humbugged, and that the other half enjoys seeing the operation performed on the first half. So when *Horace Daw* drops into the rural town of Battlesburg in search of a new field of operations, he finds its entire population ready to become the easy victims of his more expeditious and unscrupulous partner, *Wallingford*, who is soon to arrive. The pair set to work at once to bring the town into a realization of its destined glory as a metropolis. They take options on all the corner lots. They open a gilded office and pay huge salaries—in promises. They give a banquet to the local "prominent business men" who drink real wine that is bought—on account. A great syndicate is formed for the building of a factory and the general betterment of Battles-



Photograph by White, New York

Weedon Grossmith as *Mr. Freedy*; John Cluford as *John Bounsall* and Charlotte Granville as the *Countess* in *Mr. Grossmith's starring vehicle "Mr. Freedy and the Countess"*

burg and the natives are allowed—as a favor—to buy stock. It is a real favor, too, considering that the stock is going to pay seventy-five per cent. profit.

None is too humble to be denied the sunshine of *Wallingford's* generosity. *Eddie Lamb*, the hotel clerk, digs down into his strong box and yields up \$8,000—the savings of a lifetime. He has another little matter of \$1,000 hidden away somewhere but *Wallingford* suggests that he keep it for another time. "I guess I'd better for I might need it," says this shining mark. *Wallingford* agrees that he

will. The landlord of the hotel, the coal and ice magnate, the reporter of the *Blade*, the 'bus driver and even the mayor are "shaken down" with celerity.

The factory walls begin to rise. But *Battlesburg* must be linked to the outside world. So *Wallingford* takes an option on a right-of-way for a traction line. The funds of one scheme are juggled to start another and enterprise is "pyramided" upon enterprise until the sleepy town fairly hums. But suddenly someone grows inquisitive. What is going to be manufactured in the factory?

Here is a poser for *Wallingford*. He and his confederate lock themselves in their room and cudgel their brains. *Wallingford's* eye happens to rest upon a little object on the floor. "I have it!" he joyously exclaims. "We'll manufacture cloth-covered carpet tacks!" Together they improvise a sample and exhibit it to the "directors." They approve, but not without some doubts. And the next mail carries out of Battlesburg reckless orders for the machinery.

At last comes the time for the "clean-up" and "get-away." *Wallingford* is rueful, for he has fallen head over heels in love with *Fannie Jasper*, his secretary. She is the one being in Battlesburg who is suspicious of him. For the first time in his life he is seized with an impulse to turn over a new leaf and become honest. Escape, however, the pair must. But suddenly comes word that the carpet tacks have made a commercial hit and are selling like hot cakes. And in drops a rival railroad magnate with a proposition to buy up the traction franchise at a handsome profit to the promoters. *Wallingford* demands double the sum and gets it.

Now it's clear sailing, on rippling and sunny seas.

In the final act *Wallingford* is giving a splendid party at his Battlesburg villa. Everybody in the town is rich. At intervals trolley-cars hum through the streets. In the distance is the Battlesburg Cloth-Covered Carpet-Tack Factory, windows all alight, employees working over-time. Most distinguished among the citizens of the metropolis are *Mr. J. Rufus Wallingford* and *Mr. Horace Daw*. They have ceased to live by their wits and are honest men.

The moral of the play is reprehensible but its fun is incessant. The situations are amusing and the dialogue has the life and sparkle of the old Hoyt comedies. A few episodes are dragged in by the ears, but for the most part the story is consistently amusing. As a cartoon of rural gullibility and a satire of the get-rich-quick mania of the hour *Mr. Cohan's* play is really gorgeous. It also profits by the cleverness of the acting. *Mr. Hale Hamilton* and *Mr. Edward Ellis* impersonate the two plausible confidence men amusingly and *Miss Frances Ring* as the stenographer



Photograph by Byron, New York

Miss Leah Bateman-Hunter as *Anne Page*; Ferdinand Gottschalk as *Slender*; Ben Johnson as *Shallow* in the New Theatre's production of "The Merry Wives of Windsor"



Photograph by Byron, New York  
Miss Rose Coghlan as *Mistress Page*; Miss Edith Wynne Matthison as *Mistress Ford*, and Louis Calvert as *Falstaff* in the New Theatre's production of "*The Merry Wives of Windsor*"

adds the one touch of romantic interest. The rest of the characters are rural "types." They are humorously exaggerated, of course, but if you happen to have been reared in a rural community they will turn your thoughts to your childhood's happy days and you will have little difficulty in recalling a prototype for each.

**A** THOUSAND plays must have already been written around the predicament of the highly-moral bachelor whom circumstances compel to harbor an unchaperoned lady in his flat over night. In the firm conviction that every possible change had been rung on this not very amusing subject, I at first fought shy of "Mr. Preedy and the Countess" in which

Mr. Weedon Grossmith, a capital English comedian, by the way, is revisiting this country. But later I learned what I have often told others—that it is the manner rather than the matter that makes plays entertaining.

Perhaps Mr. R. C. Carton, the author, is not quite so humorous in "Mr. Preedy" as in "Mr. Hopkinson" which we all remember so pleasantly, but the new play, nevertheless, is very dexterous. The action is rapid, the situations are ingenious, the surprises are many and the dialogue is almost uniformly bright. The performance given by the English company with Mr. Grossmith at its head is clever even to the least important characters.

*Mr. Preedy* is the timid and much bullied junior partner in Bounsall and



Preedy's Emporium, London. It is very important that he should keep in the good graces of the head of the firm for he has just won away from an amorous and aggressive dentist the love of the charming *Emma Sitgreaves* who, with her lower middle class parents from Manchester, is seeing the sights of London. *Mr. Preedy* is aware that he may have troubles of his own with the narrow-minded *Emma* but he hails with joy his prospective deliverance from bachelor solitude. At this juncture *Mr. Bounsall*, the senior member, drops in with the *Countess of Rushmere*. They have started on a platonic elopement which is partly justified by the fact that the second husband of the *Countess*, the *Hon.*

*Robert Jennerway*, is on an expedition to Cairo with a dancer. There has arisen the annoying circumstance that *Mr. Bounsall* has been summoned to the bedside of his dying god-father. So he imposes upon *Mr. Preedy* the duty of harboring the *Countess* until the death-bed ceremonies are over. Well aware on which side his bread is buttered, the timid *Mr. Preedy* dares not protest.

The *Countess* remains in the flat barely twenty-four hours but in that short interval she causes havoc. The easy nonchalance with which she makes herself at home is delicious. It never once seems to occur to her that her conduct may raise unpleasant suspicions. *Mr. Preedy* tries his best to be hospitable. He engages a



Photograph by Byron, New York  
Miss Edith Wynne Matthison as *Mistress Ford* and Miss Rose Coghlan as *Mistress Page* in The New Theatre's production of "*The Merry Wives of Windsor*"



Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago

Mlle. Adeline Genée in the Butterfly and Roses dance in "The Bachelor Belles"

lady's maid, orders breakfast for two, and then discreetly spends the night in a hotel. But his elaborate observance of the conventionalities—such as are possible—is of no avail. His servants resent the lady's intrusion and give notice that they will leave. The presence of the new maid, they claim, is convincing circumstantial evidence of his guilt.

*Reginald Saunders*, the jilted dentist, also becomes aware of the *Countess*' presence in his rival's flat. He makes all haste to inform not only *Emma* but her pre-

cisely formal parents. The nephew of the *Countess* gets wind of her whereabouts and the father of the runaway husband turns up to see that the family dignity is protected. With all these complications focusing upon him at once and confronted by the horrible prospect of losing *Emma*, the dapper little *Mr. Preedy* is driven almost to distraction.

*Mr. Bounsall* returns in the midst of the excitement to explain that, in order to inherit his god-father's estate, he has been forced into a marriage with the old gentleman's ward and that, so far as he is concerned, the elopement is off. The *Countess*' husband, who has come back



Photograph by White, New York  
 Miss Adeline Genée and Sherer  
 Bachelors in "The Bachelor Belles"

unexpectedly and has followed his family to *Mr. Preedy*'s flat, hears this information with great glee for he is not yet aware of his wife's complicity in the elopement proceedings. But the truth eventually comes out and the misjudged *Mr. Preedy* is restored to *Emma*'s confidence while the husband and wife, who have been equally guilty, decide to become reconciled.

*Mr. Grossmith* plays the dapper *Mr. Preedy* and scores all his points by legitimate comedy methods. Miss Granville, a most accomplished actress of imposing stature and presence, appears as the *Countess*. These two leading performers have to keep on their mettle because the dozen other members of the cast are nearly, if not quite, as clever as they.

**N**OW that the New Theatre's stock company has de-

veloped peripatetic proclivities which will lead it to make at least one long tour each year, the events which take place on its endowed stage have assumed more than local interest. Its second season of artistic adventure has begun and in making its obeisance to Shakespeare by producing "The Merry Wives of Windsor" it has once more stubbed its toe.

It was a bit superfluous for the institution to announce that it would present "The Merry Wives" as a farce. I cannot imagine that rollicking, boisterous old Elizabethan play being given as anything else but I insist that the term implies an entertainment in which there is a preponderance of humor.

Alas for the New Theatre's "Merry Wives!" It is about as side-splitting as an unpaid gas bill.

Time was when "*Fat Jack*" *Falstaff* was a merry old wight. I can remember no evening in my long experience in the theatre more delightful than when, in London three years ago, I witnessed Sir Beerbohm Tree's performance as the obese and obtuse knight. His humor was brittle and saturnine rather than mellow and unctuous but, nevertheless, he was a capital *Falstaff*. In that notable cast Miss Ellen Terry was the *Mistress Page*. I also recall the last revival of the play in this country which was made by the late Mr. Augustin Daly with the late Mr. George Clarke as *Falstaff* and Miss Ada Rehan as *Mistress Page*. There was food both for thought and laughter in it.

Scenically and in the richness and historical accuracy of the costuming, the New Theatre's production is possibly the finest the old play has ever received in America. There are the narrow, crooked streets of old Windsor town winding in the shadow of the frowning Round



Photograph by White, New York

Frank Lalor as *Tom Jones* and Miss Mae Murray as *Susan Jane* in "The Bachelor Belles"

Tower of the Castle. There are the rows of quaintly gabled sixteenth century houses clothed in the verdure of clinging vines. There is the Garter Inn and its hospitable recesses, all in mellow loveliness. There is the severe simplicity of *Master Ford's* house. And, loveliest of all, there is the noble Windsor Forest with its canopy of interlacing oak boughs.

In spite of all this magnificence the one essential—good acting—is absent. To any player gifted with a sense of humor and skilled in the art of make-up, *Sir John Falstaff* ought to be easy of accomplishment. The ideal combines gross selfishness, overweening conceit, a tincture of sensual levity, profound self-love and sublime obtuseness with boisterous good nature and reckless, bibulous jollity. *Falstaff* imagines that he has smitten *Mistress Ford* and she, with *Mistress Page*, conspires to make a donkey of him.

As Mr. Louis Calvert acts *Falstaff* he is about as exhilarating as stale beer. So the whole play which must take its impetus from this central character is insipid and flat. Two characters, however,



shine brilliantly. As Miss Edith Wynne Matthison and Miss Rose Coghlan play *Mistress Ford* and *Mistress Page* respectively their equals would be hard to find. Some of the lesser characters, notably Mr. A. E. Anson's *Master Ford*, Mr. Ben Johnson's *Justice Shallow*, Mr. William McVay's *Innkeeper*, and Mr. Ferdinand Gottschalk's *Slender* are fairly well performed. In spite of their efforts, though, Elizabethan atmosphere and humor are almost wholly absent from the play.

**I**T NEEDS a poet, not a critic, to do justice to the art of Miss Adeline Genée. The adjectives which describe the feathery grace of this incarnation of Terpsichore were long ago exhausted. Let "classic" dancers fill the stage with their posing and posturing, let "Oriental" wrigglers twist themselves into the most intricate of bow-knots, let "Apache" dancers wrestle to the limit of collar-and-elbow style, Genée remains the one really great dancer of them all. None else can so much as approach her.

This human fluff-ball whom we have lured away from London has re-emerged in a new musical comedy by Mr. Harry B. Smith and Mr. Raymond Hubbell, entitled "The Bachelor Belles." Except that it contains Genée it does not tran-

scend its class. This time her managers have been wise enough not to give her a singing or speaking rôle but have provided three interludes for her charming specialties. Her first dance, following the "Song of the Fashions" number, is not quite up to her highest standard but in "Roses and Butterflies," to music arranged from compositions by Debussy, Gounod and Moskowski, and in a Hungarian Dance in which she is assisted by Mr. Sherer Bakefi, one of the most graceful and agile male dancers the stage has lately seen, she is delightful.

The eighteen song numbers in the piece are well taken care of by Miss Ruth Peebles, Miss Eva Fallon, Miss Eleanor Pendleton, Mr. Lawrence Wheat, Mr. John Parks and others, and the vein of boisterous humor in the story proceeds from Miss Josie Sadler and Mr. Frank Lalor. The attempts at wit in the libretto are a bit wearing but the lyrics have a pretty swing and the music tinkles merrily. The costuming and scenery are very elaborate and picturesque.

To attempt to pick out a plot out of the fragments of dialogue would be next to impossible. The "Belles" of the title are a club of girls who have taken solemn oaths never to marry. One after the other, however, they listen to masculine persuasion and succumb.



Photograph by White, New York

Miss Olive Depp as *Gertrude* and John B. Parks as *Tom Van Cortlandt* in "The Bachelor Belles"